FIERCE INVALIDS HOME FROM HOT CLIMATES

by

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based on the book by
Tom Robbins

FIRST REWRITE

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"FIERCE INVALIDS HOME FROM HOT CLIMATES"

FADE IN:

EXT. VATICAN CITY - DAY

A peaceful, placid garden within Vatican City. Birds chirp. And HIS HOLINESS THE POPE greets a line of priests and nuns. Down the line a well-traveled, world-weary man sits in a wheelchair, dressed in a nun's habit. This is SWITERS.

Title card: VATICAN CITY, ROME
             last week

Switters motions to a nun who leans over to hear him.

                       SWITERS
     The only way I'm kissing that
     ring is if they cover it with
     pussy juice.

The nun frowns.

EXT. CENTRAL SYRIAN DESERT - DAY

The hot sun burns down on a caravan of Bedouin nomads. Their camels carry heavy loads. One of the riders tucks the tip of a rocket launcher back under his tunic.

Title card: SOMEBWHERE ON THE ROAD TO JEBEL AL QAQAZ, SYRIA

Switters is one of the riders bringing up the rear. They pass a stony compound surrounded by a high wall, the only edifice in this barren landscape. Lifting up in his saddle, Switters sees tree-tops over the walls and hears sounds of female laughter coming from within. He stops.

                       TRIBESMAN
     Oh no, sir. We must not turn back.

                       SWITERS
     I'm going alone.

                       TRIBESMAN
     But sir, the camel. We have only
     seven camels.
SWITTERS
Tell your father the Khan I do
not intend to take his camel. Now
if you’ll be so kind to help me.

He motions to a folded wheelchair strapped behind his camel.

The tribesmen lower Switters into the wheelchair and place his
alligator-skin valise on his lap. Switters clasps their hands,
double-kisses the tribal leader and pushes off, maneuvering
his wheelchair over the rocky landscape towards the compound
and the laughing, girlish voices.

SWITTERS
(singing to himself)
“Meet me in St. Looey, Looey
Meet me at the fair
Don’t tell me the lights are
shining anywhere but there
We’ll dance the hoochie-coochie
You’ll be my tootsie-wootsie
If you’ll meet me in St. Looey
Meet me at the fair”

EXT. PERUVIAN JUNGLE – DAY

A MACHETE BREAKS THROUGH the thick jungle brush and Switters
steps into a clearing wearing a panama hat and sweat-stained
linen suit. No wheelchair. He stops to consider an enormous
moth spread out on a branch before him.

Title card: BOQUICHICOS, PERU
several months earlier

Native voices approach. A short, Peruvian guide with a bowl
haircut (INTI) holding a machete in one hand and Switters’
alligator valise in the other, comes up behind Switters who is
transfixed by the moth. It’s large, plump, and powdery white.

SWITTERS
This insect is making me feel... what’s the word?

Inti smiles. It’s gap-toothed.

INTI
Meester, meester. This way, meester.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
The boy spoke possibly twelve words
of English. He would be of no help.
SWITERS
Yes, I’ve got it. This insect is
making me feel...libidinous.

Inti blinks.

SWITERS (V.O.)
I’ve gotten a little ahead of
myself, here. Let me try to do
a better job of weaving this
yarn in some sort of coherent
and chronological order.

EXT. SEATTLE CITYSCAPE - DAY

Title card: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
before all that

A foggy day in Seattle town as we cruise over landmarks of the
city like the fog off Puget Sound. We end our tour on a grande
olde Victorian house on a hill in the Magnolia District.

SWITERS (V.O.) (CONT.)
From here on out I’ll be good, I
promise. I’ll keep on the straight
and narrow, eschewing the natural
tangential influence of my mind
stopping only occasionally to
smell the odd adjective or kick
some ass.

INT. SWITERS BEDROOM - DAY

The décor may be described as post-Medieval. Switters sits at
his desk under a giant tapestry wearing a house-robe and
snowman boxer shorts. He types into a laptop computer.

SWITERS (V.O.) (CONT.)
I was home recuperating from my
latest failed mission. I should
say between failed missions.
There seemed to be a whole string
of them lately. Somewhere somehow
I’d lost my touch. My heart just
wasn’t in it anymore. The vim was
out of my voom. If you’d asked
I’d have said consumer confidence
was at an all-time low.

HE TYPES AN IM -- “Who is this Brian character?”
RESPONSE -- "SUZY: Just a friend"

HE TYPES -- "Is he why you’re not coming home straight after school? I bet he’s an athlete."

SWITERS (V.O.) (CONT.)
Technically it wasn’t my home, it was my grandmother’s but with all the moving around in my life it’s the only home I’ve ever known. Incidentally, don’t let her hear I called her grandmother. She hates that word. It’s Maestra. And I’m Switters.

RESPONSE -- "SUZY: What’s gotten into you, petunia?"

SWITERS
(aloud)
I’m in love with you, dammit!
That’s the rub.

RESPONSE -- "SUZY: URAPITA"

SWITERS (CONT.)
URAPITA. What the hell does that mean?

His cellphone rings. He answers.

SWITERS
You are on a secure line.

VOICE
There’s a mole in our section!

SWITERS
Oh, hello Bobby.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

BOBBY CASE, CIA Operative and Switters’ Senior Case Officer, is in a low-flying helicopter chasing down a man on foot.

SWITERS
And what would make you say that?

BOBBY CASE
I just tortured it out of a guy! Wily bastard got away before I could get a name out of him.
INT. SWITTERS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Switters stares at the screen, not all that concerned.

SWITTERS
Other than that, everything well?

BOBBY CASE
Never better. But this is why our Intel’s been shit. We’ve got to find this mole. So keep your eyes out. Gotta go.

SWITTERS
Wait a minute. URAPITA. Mean anything to you?

BOBBY CASE
Lemme think. . . hang on.

SHOTS ARE FIRED. Switters holds the phone away from his ear.

BOBBY CASE
Uhm, You Are A Pain In The Ass.

SWITTERS
Right, of course. Thanks.

BOBBY CASE
Have a nice day.

He hangs up.

MAESTRA (O.S.)
Switters!

SWITTERS
One minute!

SWITTERS TYPES -- “I may be a PITA but you have to admit it’s a GOOD PAIN. Gotta go. C U at dinner”

MAESTRA (O.S.)
Switters!

He logs off -- the CIA emblem is his background image -- and walks out of his bedroom, leaning over the railing to an indoor courtyard.

SWITTERS
Yes?
Down below stands MAESTRA, a braceleted Grande Dame herself in a long flowing muumuu and headwrap. She looks like a 1920s diva or aging drag queen. She waives a stack of papers at him.

MAESTRA
Switters come down here this instant, I wish to speak with you about something.

INT. MAESTRA’S LIBRARY - DAY

On her desk are framed photos of a young girl in a high-school uniform (SUZY). There are also some of Switters in various exotic locales.

Maestra sits on the couch, the papers on her lap. Switters sits across from her. Over his shoulder, amongst the collectables is a parrot in a triangular cage.

MAESTRA
You’re a wicked degenerate. A rascal, a wastrel and a pervert.

SWITTERS
And a good morning to you, Maestra.

MAESTRA
Such a tragic waste of genius. The pride of Berkeley. Did you know the Dean of students personally told me you broke the bank when it came to cybernetics and linguistics?

SWITTERS
Don’t forget my nine hours of modern poetry.

MAESTRA
And look what you’ve become.

SWITTERS
Well you can hardly say I’m a slouch. I’m a dedicated, decorated public servant with top-secret security clearance and I happen to know the word for a woman’s private parts in seventy-one different languages.
SWITTERS (V.O.)
I really do. It’s kind of a hobby.

MAESTRA
Am I supposed to sleep better at nights knowing the likes of you are guarding the henhouse? It amazes me they ever recruited you in the first place.

SWITTERS
Perhaps it was my firm jaw and air of tragic nobility.

MAESTRA
Or weak moral fiber.

SWITTERS
It’s government service, Maestra. Morality’s got nothing to do with it. So what’s this all about?

Maestra lowers her eyes at him. The gaze of an oil tanker as seen from a tug boat.

MAESTRA
Suzy.

SWITTERS
What about her?

MAESTRA
She’s your sister, for God’s sake.

SWITTERS
Step-sister.

MAESTRA
She’s eighteen.

SWITTERS
Yes?

MAESTRA
So keep your hands off her.

SWITTERS
I resent that accusation. In fact like a Knight-errant, I am a protector of her virginity. Although I will say that in some cultures—
MAESTRA
Not this one, Mister.

SWITTERS
I admit there is a certain irresistible appeal about her. It’s the innocence.

She waves the stack of papers.

MAESTRA
I don’t think these emails sound so innocent.

SWITTERS
How did you get those? My email’s encrypted by the US government.

MAESTRA
I’ve hacked into Suzy’s account. It’s my network, for Chrissake. Do you think I’m a rank amateur?

SWITTERS
Clever.

Maestra gets up and walks over to the window.

MAESTRA
I wonder who might find these letters amusing? Your employers, perhaps?

SWITTERS
I hardly think they’d mind.

MAESTRA
How about your mother and angry step-father? One whiff of this to them and Suzy will be shipped off to boarding school and you will never see her again. Not to mention he would break every bone in your body, the brute.

SWITTERS
You wouldn’t.

MAESTRA
Wouldn’t I?

Standoff.
SWITTERS
(breaking down)
Please don’t. I just want to be near her. I can’t make it through my day without knowing that she’ll be at the end of it. I promise no impropriety. I just want to admire her from afar.

MAESTRA
That’s not good enough.

SWITTERS
Well, what is?

MAESTRA
What’s your next assignment?

SWITTERS
South America.

MAESTRA
Knocking off some propped-up dictator, I suppose.

SWITTERS
I’ve told you I don’t do windows. No, The Company recruited a very promising young agent down there, fronted him a new Honda and now he’s having second thoughts. I’ve got to try to bring him back into the fold.

MAESTRA
You’re going to terminate him with extreme prejudice?

SWITTERS
No, probably take him to lunch. Why?

MAESTRA
Sailor Boy.

Switters turns and looks over his shoulder at the parrot in the cage.

SWITTERS
What about him?
MAESTRA
Sailor Boy, your equal in age and intelligence, is getting on in years. He’s had a very good life but I’m afraid he’s not long with us and I’d like for him to live his last feathered days in the wild, amongst his own kind.

SWITTERS
Oh, no.

MAESTRA
I want you to release him somewhere peaceful and safe where he can be free to pursue his avian interests until his last squawk.

SWITTERS
No way.

MAESTRA
A quick detour, that’s all I’m asking. Expand the pinhole on your map. Just take him up the Amazon.

SWITTERS
“Just take him up the Amazon?!" I’m going to Lima. Lima’s on the coast. It’s hundreds of miles from the Amazon. Nope, South America holds a minimum of charm for this buckaroo. It’s too damn vivid. I am going in and out and not a moment longer and nothing can change my mind. Sorry, can’t do it Maestra. You’ve got your burdens, I’ve got mine.

MAESTRA
That’s precisely your problem, Switters, all you care about is yourself.

SWITTERS
Well, it keeps me busy. And alive. I’ve noticed that self-preservation is the key to survival.

MAESTRA
Your tone disappoints me.
She walks over to her desk and picks up the phone.

SWITTERS
Who are you calling?

MAESTRA
Your step-father. For your sake, I hope the traffic from Sacramento is diabolical. Should give you a good head start.

He gets up and takes the phone from her, hanging it up.

SWITTERS
Blackmail? I’d think that would be beneath you, Maestra.

MAESTRA
Don’t underestimate me. That’s age-ist.

The bird moves suddenly in the cage -- they look at him.

MAESTRA (CONT.)
Clean up your life, Switters. You look like the bottom of that cage.

Switters pokes the cage. The parrot shifts and squawks.

SAILOR BOY
PEOPLE OF ZEE WORLD, RELAX!

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Maestra, Switters and his stunning 18-year old step-sister SUZY sit around the dining room table eating Thai food out the boxes. As billed, Suzy is irresistible, innocent and untouchable in her High School uniform. Switters sits across from her, clean and freshly showered wearing a Polo shirt with a “CRAFT” crest. He has a beaming, unnatural smile.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
Luckily, the CIA has an unlimited budget for recreational drugs many of which, including the Ecstasy I popped just before dinner, actually make you feel good when you probably should be feeling bad.

An uncomfortable silence hangs over the table. The environment could be described as “strained” -- forks scrape plates.
MAESTRA
Sit up straight. Do you want to be Quasimodo when you grow up?

They both sit up in their chairs.

MAESTRA (CONT.)
So how was school today?

SUZY
Sucky. Everyone is incredibly lame. I can’t wait to start college.

MAESTRA
Have you given any thought to a major?

SUZY
I’m thinking about religious studies.

Switters laughs.

SUZY (CONT.)
What’s wrong with that, Switters?

SWITTERS
Nothing, if you believe in that sort of thing.

SUZY
Why do you always have to be so negative? Don’t you believe in miracles and stuff?

SWITTERS
It’s just that my credibility alarm goes off when people start living in whales and visions of the Virgin Mary pop up on Wonder Bread. I thought this stuff was supposed to make you happy?

Back to the silence.

SUZY
Let’s play a game.

SWITTERS
Twister?

Maestra stares at him icily.
SUZY
No, I mean like tell me something about yourself that we don’t already know. Me and Bri- I mean I played it with a friend last weekend.

SWITTERS
And what did your friend say? Lemme guess: he wants to play in the NFL.

SUZY
Can’t tell you, it’s a secret.

MAESTRA
I was once seduced by both Laurel and Hardy.

SWITTERS
Wow. . . well that’s something.

SUZY
How about you, Switters? What secret do you have to reveal to us?

Switters looks up at the ceiling, pondering for a moment.

SWITTERS
The more advertising I see, the less I want to buy.

Beat.

Suzy laughs at him.

Switters joins in, laughing unnaturally. Maestra frowns.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Maestra sleeps in a chair in front of the TV. Suzy dances around the room to punk music while Switters tries to keep up. His moves are jerky and awkward as he tries to find the beat.

SUZY
What’s wrong? Not your speed?

SWITTERS
I’m an Oklahoma man, myself. Broadway Showtunes. Ever heard of South Pacific? Me and My Gal?
SUZY
Sounds sucky to me.

She dances around him.

Switters backs up and KNOCKS INTO THE BIRDCAGE, sending Sailor Boy atwitter. Switters grabs the cage just before it falls over. Parrott feathers fall to the floor and Sailor Boy is hanging on by a beak.

Switters looks over at Maestra who glares at him. Switters puts the cage back and begins dancing again with Suzy. Maestra settles back in the chair and WE PULL OUT OF THE WINDOW SEEING THE TABLEAU FROM OUTSIDE THE HOUSE AND FADE TO:

EXT. CITY PLAZA - LIMA, PERU - DAY

The city is gnarled in traffic -- bikes, mopeds and cars going in every direction.

Title card:  

LIMA, PERU

At a table in an outdoor café, Switters sits in his white linen suit across from a young Peruvian. HECTOR SUMAC. Hector pours a glass of wine for him.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
Hector Sumac was the prospective agent and pisco was the vile local potable.

HECTOR
It is pisco. Peruvian wine. Good no?

SWITTERS
Quintessentially South American. So what seems to be the problem, Hector? Why the cold feet? Problems with the car? You know you need to put gasoline in that little hole in the back.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
Forget what you’ve seen, mine is essentially a sales job. Our pitch is to convince someone that betraying their country by telling us secrets is in their best interests. My quota had been down for some time and the top brass (MORE)
SWITTERS (V.O.) (cont’d)
back at the pickle factory were
starting to grumble. But I knew
I could close this guy. Was I
really losing my edge?

HECTOR
It is a very difficult thing you
ask me to do, to tell secrets from
from my government. And dangerous.

SWITTERS
Yes, hence the Honda.

HECTOR
Our federal administration is
completely corrupt.

SWITTERS
Join the club.

HECTOR
So despite your- how do you call
it, “Company?” Despite your
Company’s history of illegal
involvement in Latin American
affairs I will work for you.
But Agent Switters-

SWITTERS
Actually, I’m an Operative, you’re
the Agent. Doesn’t matter,
continue.

HECTOR
I wish to be completely honest
with you. The truth is I do not
think I have the character
qualifications for the job.

SWITTERS
And what qualifications are those?

Hector leans closer.

HECTOR
I am afraid the things I am most
interested are sex, drugs and rock
‘n’ roll.

Beat.
SWITTERS
You’re perfect.

A PROSTITUTE comes over and whispers something in Switters’ hear. He nods, leaning forward to Hector.

SWITTERS
My Spanish is good but not that good. She says she wants me to make love to her in the culo. What’s a culo?

HECTOR
Her ass hole.

SWITTERS spits out his drink.

SWITTERS
Right. Of course.
(to the prostitute)
Sorry. Maybe some other time.

She walks off and Switters dabs himself dry.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Too damn vivid South America.

INT. GRAND HOTEL BOLIVAR - EVENING
Switters walks through the lobby and approaches the front desk.

CLERK
Si, senor.

SWITTERS
It has just occurred to me to inform your housekeeping staff that I have a live parrot in my room. I don’t want anyone to be alarmed.

CLERK
Si, senor.

Switters walks towards the bar off to the left.

SWITTERS
Oh, and it might say some unusual things.
CLERK
Of course, senor.

Switters enters the bar.

INT. GRAND HOTEL BOLIVAR BAR – CONTINUOUS

Switters bellies up to the bar.

BARTENDER
Good evening, glass of pisco?

SWITTERS
Please no.

BARTENDER
Coffee?

BRITISH VOICE
Not bloody likely!

Switters looks down the bar and sees the only other person there -- a heavyset British man, REGINALD POTNEY SMITHE.

SWITTERS
Potney?

POTNEY
I thought it was you.

SWITTERS
R. Potney Smithe, what brings you to this microwave?

POTNEY
Came to study some of the bloody natives, haven’t I.

SWITTERS
Tenure time again at the diploma factory?

POTNEY
Afraid so. Going to write up some long-winded tripe about a roving tribe of savages and their habits and all that.

SWITTERS
Ethnology. The last refuge of the scholar.
POTNEY
Join me for a pisco. For old
time’s sake. Two old CRAFT
members to each other.

SWITTERS
Don’t mind if I do.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
Craft Club is a secret society
with branches in Hong Kong and
Bangkok whose members meet
periodically to drink a lot and
discuss Finnegans Wake. When
asked about it later, members
say “CRAFT” Can’t Remember A-

SWITTERS (CONT.)
(holding up the glass)
Who would have thought that the
juice of a grape could be
transformed into a substance so
near napalm?

They both drink.

POTNEY
Here on Company business?

SWITTERS
Partially.

POTNEY
Just ran into your old colleague
Audubon Poe. Are you all down
here on a convention or something?

SWITTERS
Poe’s ex-pickle, actually. No, we
go wherever we’re needed. I’m off
to Iquitos tomorrow.

POTNEY
Whatever for?

SWITTERS
Humanitarian mission, of sorts.
Going to set an aging parrot free
in the jungle on behalf of an
aging relative.
POTNEY
If you take it to Iquitos it won’t be free for long.

SWITTERS
Why not?

POTNEY
Despite its reputation as a remote jungle town Iquitos is about as urban and grim as Liverpool. Big parrot market. Your friend will only be captured and put in another cage, probably brought back to the United States.
No, you want to go up to Boquichicos, hire a boat and go up the river. There’s a parrot sanctuary up there.

SWITTERS
Oh.

POTNEY
I’m heading up that way myself to study this bloody tribe. You’re welcome to come along.

SWITTERS
Really? Well, thanks. Actually, I don’t mind if I do.
(raising his glass)
To a bon voyage.

POTNEY
Let’s just hope there aren’t too many insects.

SWITTERS
Here here.

EXT. BOQUICHICOS - DAY

A small, Amazonian jungle town. Straw huts, unpaved streets and vacant lots. Switters and Potney walk together -- Potney in full British archaeological get up: safari clothes and a pith helmet, Switters in his linen suit, carrying the parrot cage in one hand and his crocodile-skin valise in the other.

Along the riverside are a few rickety boats. Potney stops to talk to INTI, the Peruvian boat captain we saw earlier as Switters amuses the locals with a video camera.
POTNEY
(irate)
Que piensa soy?! UN TONTO?!

SWITTERS
What’s up?

POTNEY
The blighter wants to charge us
twice what it should cost to take
us up river.

SWITTERS
Think he knows we’re tourists?

Switters walks around and sees the name printed on the side of
the boat -- LITTLE BLESSED VIRGIN OF THE STARRY WATERS.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
We’ll take it.
(Potney and Inti look at him)
I like the name. I have a special
feeling for the Virgin. Please
have your men bring our bags. I’ll
carry this.

He plops the cage down on deck.

SAILOR BOY
PEOPLE OF ZEE WORLD, RELAX!

The locals jump back.

SWITTERS
Some very good advice learned
from a very smart woman.
(he puts his arm around Potney)
Pot old pal, we’ve got a date
with a virgin even if she looks
like an old whore.

EXT. UCOYALI RIVER - DAY

The Blessed Virgin toots upstream. Switters and Potney sit in
the stern with Inti who steers the motor-propelled boat while
smoking a cigarette wedged in the gap between his teeth.
Sailor Boy’s cage swings from a hook and Switters puts the
video camera away in his valise.

POTNEY
Are you a naturalist?
SWITERS
I’ve been called a lot of things
but no, my benefactor wishes to
have a recording of the event.
Can you imagine not trusting
your own grandson?

POTNEY
In your case, yes.

SWITERS
So tell me about this tribe.

POTNEY
The Kandakanero? They are the
most elusive tribe in all of
Amazonia. There’s a rumor that
they were seen outside Boquichicos
and I’ve been trying to catalogue
as many of their socially
transmitted customs, morals, laws
and beliefs as possible before
they disappear completely.
Actually, I’m hoping to interview
their shaman, a mystical leader
with a funny shaped-head and an
even funnier name. Loosely
translated into English it means
End-of-Time. To focus on a single
individual within the group is
unprecedented. It will be a small
coup if I can interview this
extraordinary man.

SWITERS
And bolster your chances for
tenure.

POTNEY
Lock ‘em in.

SWITERS
Sounds like pretty fulfilling work.

POTNEY
Actually, it is.

Switters looks out at the muddy river flowing past and the
miles of thick jungle on either side.
EXT. UP THE UCOYALI RIVER - DAY

Deeper into the jungle now, there is no sign of civilization just the murky brown river, the Little Virgin, our travelers and a parrot under wraps.

Switters reaches into the bottom of his valise opening a secret compartment which has a handgun, a CD of "Broadway’s Best Showtunes" and a photograph of his step-sister in a cheerleader’s uniform. He takes out the photo and admires it.

POTNEY
Your girlfriend?

SWITTERS
Not exactly.

POTNEY
Uhm, Switters old chap. . .

SWITTERS
Yes?

POTNEY
Don’t be overly alarmed but you may want to look over your right shoulder.

Switters does and he sees a MASSIVE HAIRY SPIDER rearing up on its hind legs atop of a bunch of bananas, ready to strike.

SWITTERS
AAAAAA!

He jumps back and BLAM! shoots the spider, sending banana bits splattering.

Beat.

Potney helps him up and the crew laughs.

POTNEY
You alright, man? Overreacted a bit, I’d say.

SWITTERS
Whoah! Yes, thank you. Maybe I should open up my own comedy club in Boquichicos. Call it Arachnophobia. (bowing to the crew) Anyone for fruit salad?
Suddenly, a pelting rain pours down on them.

**POTNEY**

It’s alright. Should last about twenty minutes or so.

**SWITTERS**

Too-damn-vivid South America.

**EXT. JUNGLE - DAY**

The sun is shining again on our band of merry travelers. Now they are on foot, Inti cutting a trail through the jungle with his machete, Potney and crew bring up the rear, parrot cage in tow. One of the natives records everything on the video camera. Switters sings “Come Fly With Me”, his tune echoing off the trees.

**SWITTERS**

(singing)

“Come fly with me let’s float down to Peruuuu
In Llama Land there’s a one man band and he’ll toot
his flute for you
Come fly with me let’s take off
in the bluuuuue.”

He’s Fred Astaire-ing now, dancing through the jungle.

**SWITTERS (CONT.)**

C’mon Potney, you know Sammy Cahn

Potney ignores him, shaking his head.

**SWITTERS**

“It’s perfect for a flying honeymoon they SAAAY
Come on fly with me let’s fly,
Pack up let’s FLY AWAAAAAY”

They come to a clearing. Switters stops, looking around at the idyllic surroundings.

**SWITTERS**

I think this is as good a place as any.

He waves forward the parrot cage, removes the cover and holds up Sailor Boy. The videographer focuses his camera.
SWITTERS (CONT.)
Well, Sailor Boy. This is where we part ways. I hope you enjoy your remaining days free as a bird skipping across the rooftops of the world. In fact, you’re not Sailor Boy at all anymore. From here on out you’ve got no name.

He opens the door of the cage. For a moment, nothing happens. Sailor Boy looks around.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Go on.

Sailor Boy flutters and then darts out the cage, flying up to a nearby branch. With one last look back he circles up towards the top of the trees.

BLAM!

He’s shot down out of the sky. . .

. . .landing on the jungle floor with a THUMP.

SUDDENLY, THE WOODS ARE FILLED WITH PAINTED NATIVE FACES THAT HAVE STEPPED OUT FROM BEHIND EVERY TREE AND BUSH.

POTNEY
The Kandakanero.

SWITTERS
Shit. For lack of a better word.

POTNEY
No, I think that just about sums it up.

EXT. KANDAKANERO CAMPGROUND – DAY

Switters and Potney are surrounded by a circle of natives. One of them is their shaman, END-OF-TIME, who circles around them.

SWITTERS
Seems friendly enough.

End-of-Time bares his teeth. All the natives point their spears and guns. Switters and Potney raise their hands.

POTNEY
I forgot to mention something.
FLAShback --

Int. Russian Presidential Residence - Evening

An elegant diplomatic function in the Presidential Palace. Men wear tuxedos and the women are bejeweled.

Title Card: Russian President's private residence, Moscow
3 Weeks Earlier

Int. Russian President's Bedroom - Evening

Potney tip-toes into the President’s private chamber and sees a small golden pyramid on the shelf.

Potney (V.O.)
A mystical relic of the KandakanerO taken by the Russians during colonial times.
The Tsars didn’t have much success in Latin America but they knew how to steal from the ancients as well as anyone.

Potney takes the pyramid and tucks it into his jacket.

Potney (V.O.) (CONT.)
I told the Kandakanero I’d get it for them.

Back to Present --

Ext. Kandakanero Campground - Day

Switters and Potney still have their hands up.

Potney
Legend claims it restores sexual potency.

Switters
I can see why they’d want it back. Okay, so give ‘em the box.

Potney
It’s a pyramid and I don’t have it. That’s why it was my good fortune to run into you. I thought you could come along and help me smooth things out.

(More)
POTNEY (cont’d)
with End-of-Time here. It’s the kind of thing you people do, isn’t it?

SWITTERS
Not exactly. So where is it?

POTNEY
I’m not at liberty to say.

A shorter native whispers to End-of-Time, translating everything they’re saying.

TRANSLATOR
Kayga garl, huk hina sajra 
rumishongo, runo abajeno 
Kandakanero tlyanapi sumaj 
gullgikamaq.

POTNEY
Do you have any idea how much that little thing appears to be worth? I’ve stashed it away somewhere safe where no man can get at it.

Now the translator speaks excitedly, waving his arms and pointing at them.

SWITTERS
Potney you fool!

End-of-Time takes off his headdress -- the top of his head is shaped like a triangle.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Look at his head. It’s-

POTNEY
Extraordinary!

SWITTERS
It looks like a triangle!

POTNEY
Or a pyramid.

End-of-Time walks up close to Switters’ face and puts his hand on the back of his neck.

END-OF-TIME
Piti kuna akapay qamkunap kanan.
TRANSLATOR
I will curse you now.

SWITTERS
Oh, okay.

A BLINDING WHITE FLASH KNOCKS SWITTERS OFF HIS FEET AND INTO DREAMLAND

FADE TO WHITE

WITHIN THE WHITE, LARGE SILVERY BULBS TAKE SHAPE, CIRCLE EACH OTHER AND THEN DISAPPEAR

EXT. KANDAKANERO CAMPGROUND - EVENING

The campground is now deserted except for Switters and Potney who wake up around a small fire. Switters lies in a hammock and Potney is on the ground. They come to.

SWITTERS
Whoah.

POTNEY
Oh, dear.

SWITTERS
Did you see-

POTNEY
The bulbs? Yes. What do you think they were?

SWITTERS
I don’t know. Where is everybody?

POTNEY
They’ve undoubtedly moved on to some other neck of the woods.

SWITTERS
I’m getting a memory. I think I did something... wrong.

POTNEY
Oh yes, that.

SWITTERS
What was it?

Potney motions to the camera on Switters’ chest who flips opens the monitor and rewinds.
IN THE VIDEO -- we see everyone sitting in a circle and Switters with his eyes practically rolled up behind his head. He chews some food out of a broth. A moment later he pulls a colorful feather out of his mouth.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Oh, no. Sailor Boy.

POTNEY
Don’t suppose your grandmamma will be too pleased.

SWITTERS
Maestra, please. I’m in enough trouble as it is. What am I going to do?

POTNEY
Are you sure it was her bird?

IN THE VIDEO -- we see Switters slowly pull a bird anklet out of his mouth. He turns it on the side: “Sailor Boy”

Switters turns off the camera.

POTNEY
Well, as you Americans are fond of saying: “let’s get the fuck out of here.”

SWITTERS
My feelings exactly.

He is about to put it on the ground WHEN HE STOPS.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Hang on a sec. There was something else. Do you remember something about a curse?

POTNEY
Poppycock.

SWITTERS
Yes, of course. But what was it? Something about not touching the ground. Yes, that’s it. End-of-Time said, as I understood it, that if my feet ever touched the ground again I would fall over dead.
The dirty bugger.

Yes, I’m sure that’s it. Was that what you heard?

Potney gets up, brushing himself off.

Silly native superstition, if you ask me.

I’m glad you agree. Wasn’t the same cast upon you?

No, but my taboo was equally ridiculous.

What was it?

Load of bosh. Totally off the bean. Same consequences as your affliction but End-of-Time told me. . .

Yes man, what is it?

That I would face death if I were ever to touch another man’s willy.

Hah!

Rubbish, obviously.

And there’s no danger of you doing that.

Quite.

Not really fair, is it?
POTNEY
I don’t think fair has anything
to do with it. Let’s get going.
We should be able to pick up the
river back that way.

Switters is about to hop out of the hammock but STOPS HIS FOOT
JUST BEFORE IT TOUCHES THE GROUND.

SWITTERS
Just for the sake of argument, is
this something you’d be willing to
put to the test? I mean why should
it be on me?

POTNEY
It’s silly. We’re dealing here
with the primitive mind.

SWITTERS
Of course. But just for the sake
of sociological value, isn’t it
something we should test? For
the sake of the field.

POTNEY
Absolutely not.

SWITTERS
So you’re afraid to test it?

POTNEY
Fear has nothing to do with it.
It’s voodoo superstition with no
basis in fact.

SWITTERS
Yes but as a scientist, as an
ethnologist, you must occasionally
have to undertake experiments in
the name of science that you may
find personally distasteful but
are necessary in order to study
the local culture. In fact, by
not testing it are you not being
negligent to your field?

SWITTERS UNZIPS HIS FLY AND PULLS OUT HIS PECKER.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
And I for one don’t see why I
should be the one who has to test
(MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d)
this out when you’re the one who got us into this mess in the first place.

POTNEY
I’m a married man for God’s sake!

SWITTERS
Easy, big fella. Listen, it’s not my cup of tea either. But what we’re testing here is your professional dedication.

POTNEY
Put that away.

SWITTERS
This is larger than you or me. I’m testing your professionalism. I’m questioning your dedication to your craft. If you believe in your life’s work, if you believe in the rigors of your field, if you are a true scientist. . .then you will touch my shmeckle.

POTNEY
Not a chance.

SWITTERS
Do it for your field. Do it for your Queen. Your country. No, better yet, do it for yourself.

POTNEY
No.

SWITTERS
Just touch it, man!

POTNEY
No.

SWITTERS
Are you a scientist?

POTNEY
Yes.

SWITTERS
Are you a man?
POTNEY
Yes.

SWITTERS
You’re the one who got us into this, now touch it!

POTNEY
No.

SWITTERS
Touch my shmeckle!

POTNEY
If I do, will your drop this nonsense and we can leave this God forsaken place?

SWITTERS
Yes.

POTNEY
Alright, I’ll do it.

Potney gets down to all fours on the ground by the hammock. Switters swivels his hips.

Potney reaches out.

SWITTERS
Don’t grab it.

POTNEY
I wasn’t going to.

SWITTERS
Just touch it.

POTNEY
Alright.

SWITTERS
Just a poke.

POTNEY
Alright.

Potney holds out his index finger, slowly heading towards Switters’ pecker like God reaching out to Adam on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
SWITTERS
Go on. I don’t like this any more than you do.

Potney scrunches his face and makes the final move forward.
Contact is made. . .
. . .AND POTNEY DROPS DEAD.

Switters looks down at him, stunned.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Pot? Potney?

There is a rustling nearby and Inti busts through the trees, shocked by the scene.

SWITTERS
It’s not what you think.

Inti rushes over and kneels beside Potney.

INTI
Muy muerto. Muy muerto.
(looking up at Switters)
This meester is very, very dead.

SWITTERS
(falling back in the hammock)
You better call your men. You’re going to have to carry me out of here like a pig on a stick.

EXT. LANGLEY, VA - DAY

A sign over the highway says “CIA NEXT RIGHT”

EXT. CIA ENTRANCE - DAY

A security guard checks ID’s of the drivers lined up outside the famous CIA Headquarters. We hear the song “Someone To Watch Over Me” over the next few scenes:

SONG
There’s a little someone
I’m longing to see
I hope that he turns out to be someone to watch over me. . .
EXT. CIA PARKING LOT - DAY
A car is parked at an off-angle in the handicapped parking section by the front doors.

INT. CIA LOBBY - DAY
A long line of people wait to get into the main entrance. They seem impatient. This isn’t a normal delay.

Up ahead SWITERS SITS IN A WHEELCHAIR wearing a blue blazer and loafers with no socks, trying to get through a turnstile. The guard looks impatient.

SWITERS
I’m stuck. I can’t get through.

INT. OFFICE OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS - DAY
The nameplate on the desk says “MAYFLOWER CABOT FITZGERALD”. Behind the desk is the man, facing our wheelchair-bound hero. Bobby Case sits in the corner spinning a bullet on the table.

MAYFLOWER
Hector Sumac is missing.

SWITERS
Whom?

MAYFLOWER
Hector Sumac, you idiot. The Agent you recruited in Lima last week.

SWITERS
Oh, Hector? I’m sure he’ll be alright.

MAYFLOWER
We don’t think he’ll be alright at all. In fact, we think something’s happened to him. We believe your intelligence has been compromised.

SWITERS
That’s one way of putting it. Three years at Berkeley and nine hours of modern poetry will do that to you. In fact our whole society-
MAYFLOWER
We’ve been tracking a Russian mole in your section. We believe Hector was about to reveal the mole’s identity when he disappeared. We believe it’s a kidnapping.

SWITTERS
That’s terrible.

BOBBY CASE
The mole could be anyone with access to your movements. Someone you’ve known all your life. Someone you’ve never met.

MAYFLOWER
As your Senior Case Officer, Bobby Case will be in charge.

SWITTERS
Well, it sounds like you’ve got things under control. As you can see some personal issues have come up. So good luck.

Switters moves but Mayflower opens a thick file on his desk.

MAYFLOWER
I won’t deny that your record is impressive. You’ve been part of dozens of successful clandestine missions despite breaking every rule in the book along the way. Mr. Switters, you are the most commended, highly complained about officer in your section.

SWITTERS
Switters. Just Switters.

Mayflower glares at him.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Sorry, sir. Continue.

MAYFLOWER
However, over the course of the past year your recruitment of new agents is virtually nonexistent, almost all the information you’ve gathered has been old or redundant.

(MORE)
MAYFLOWER (cont’d)
And I have to ask myself why is a smart guy like you producing so little? At this point, my best guess is that you’re the mole.

SWITTERS
Me? I’m not selling any secrets. I assure you that’s just your run-of-the-mill professional negligence. Tell him, Bobby.

MAYFLOWER
Yes, Bobby assures me you’re not motivated enough to pull off something like this.

SWITTERS
Thank you, Bobby. Nice to know you can count on your friends in times of need.

BOBBY CASE
Sorry, pal. We’ve got to vet everyone.

MAYFLOWER
(taking out a pen)
Tell us about Peru. Did you engage in any activity outside your official duties worth noting? Did you interact with any suspicious people or encounter anything... out of the ordinary?

Switters leans back defensively.

He crosses his legs.

SWITTERS
No. Not really.

Mayflower reaches into his desk.

MAYFLOWER
Operation molehunt is on. Bobby will fill you in on the details. In the meantime, I want you to stay in the country and absolutely no contact with anyone about any sensitive international information.
SWITERS
I can do that.

MAYFLOWER
And there’s one more thing.

Mayflower pulls out a green slip, signing it.

SWITERS
Oh no, please don’t. I hate those things. I’m telling you the truth, I swear.

Mayflower hands it to him.

MAYFLOWER
We’d like you to take a polygraph. Just to be sure.

SWITERS
Look, I should probably explain my legs.

MAYFLOWER
I just assume you fell down the stairs at a whorehouse. Are you the one who parked in the handicapped space?

SWITERS
Yes, sir.

MAYFLOWER
I had you towed.

SWITERS
Thank you.

INT. POLYGRAPH ROOM - DAY

A bare room with a modern desk in the center which is actually a polygraph machine and computer. The polygrapher is a touch crazy, outwardly smiling while harboring the deepest suspicions. The face of happiness and the heart of darkness. CHRISTOPHER WALKEN, perhaps.

He stands over Switters, putting nodes on Switters’ fingers and wrapping coils around his chest.

WALKEN
This machine will measure your

(MORE)
psychological reactions to my questions. When you’re lying it will show up on my computer printout here. A man once admitted to me, quite without prodding, to killing his wife, chopping up her body and discarding the pieces. There we go.

He looks at Switters as if he’s his pride and joy and then sits down behind his desk, looking at the screen and smiles.

SWITERS
What is it?

WALKEN
It says you’re lying already.

SWITERS
But I haven’t said anything.

Walken ignores him and takes notes.

WALKEN
Do you know me?

SWITERS
No. I mean I just met you so, yes. In a way.

WALKEN
Do you intend to lie to me on this test?

SWITERS
No.

WALKEN
Have you ever engaged in deviant sex?

SWITERS
Isn’t all sex kind of deviant? I mean isn’t that the point?

WALKEN
Yes or no, please. True/False: I have never thought about what it would be like to be a member of the opposite sex.
Walken writes.

SWITTERS
Hey, you wrote before I answered!

WALKEN
Sometimes you just know. True/
False: I rarely like to harm
animals.

Beat.

SWITTERS
Is that a trick question?

WALKEN
Who won the World Series last
year?

SWITTERS
I don’t know. The Advertisers?

WALKEN
Are you an agent for the Russian
Intelligence service?

SWITTERS
No.

WALKEN
Where is Coney Island?

SWITTERS
Wherever you want it to be.

WALKEN
Have you ever had a snake bite?
A friend of mine was bitten by
a snake in the Cambodian jungle.
It was a terrible death,
trembling with fever, blinded by
the venom as it ravaged his
nervous system.

He beams as if he’s just said something wonderful. He studies
Switters’ face for a reaction.

SWITTERS
Can I go now?
INT. LANGLEY HALLWAY - DAY

Switters wheels and Bobby Case walks down the corridor.

BOBBY CASE
Sorry ‘bout all that, kid. Mayflower’s got a stick up his ass for procedure and I wanted your name crossed off the list. So what the hell happened to you?

SWITTERS
Had some trouble up the Amazon. I don’t know, pal. My heart’s just not in it anymore.

BOBBY CASE
Nonsense. You’ve just hit a rough patch, we’ll snap you out of it.

SWITTERS
No, the wahoo’s dried up. I’ve got to get out of this mess and I don’t even know where to begin.

BOBBY CASE
Forget about it. Let’s barbeque, have some burgers and beers. Texas style. We need to pick up some buns.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - DAY

The supermarket is right at the edge of campus. Switters and Bobby Case walk/wheel across the parking lot.

BOBBY CASE
I like to shop here. It’s a bit out of the way but you get a good look at the college tail. Imagine the possibilities!

They approach an entrance where protestors shout and hold up signs: “CIA = EVIL”, “NO CIA RECRUITMENT ON CAMPUS” One of the protestors shouts right into Bobby’s face.

STUDENT
YOU PEOPLE ARE RUINING THIS COUNTRY!

Bobby gets behind Switters, pointing down to garner sympathy.
INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Bobby Case wheels Switters down the aisles, throwing food onto his lap as if he were a shopping cart.

BOBBY CASE
Okay, let’s take this one thing at a time. First order of business is to get rid of this curse and get you back on your feet.

SWITTERS
That would probably entail getting End-of-Time to lift the taboo.

BOBBY CASE
Alright, so let’s think about that. We’re both Company men, how would the boys at the pickle factory approach this problem?

SWITTERS
Probably pay someone off. Or send some goon to cut him down.

BOBBY CASE
Okay, that’s an idea. I could fly down to South America, find this End-of-Time guy and twist his arm until he lifted the curse.

SWITTERS
Always the way of the Cowboy, Bobby. Meantime why don’t I track down the pyramid and we’ll offer it back to him. Shazam. No curse.

BOBBY CASE
Now you’re talking. But what do you think it all means? Does the curse have some symbolism at all or is it just some jungle wiseguy having fun with a city slicker?

SWITTERS
I’ve been thinking about that myself. Do you remember the story that monk told us in Rishikesh? He said that a great spiritual master was once asked what it was like to be Enlightened. The master answered “oh, it’s just (MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d) like ordinary life. Except that you’re two inches off the ground.”

BOBBY CASE
Yeah.

SWITTERS
Well look at me. That seems to be the exact predicament I’ve found myself in.

BOBBY CASE
Okay. So?

SWITTERS
So maybe End-of-Time was trying to show me a glimpse of what it’s like to be Enlightened.

BOBBY CASE
That’s interesting. Do you feel Enlightened?

SWITTERS
No.

BOBBY CASE
Can you see if those are seeded buns? They get in my teeth.

TWO VERY SUSPICIOUS MEN linger by the cottage cheese, watching our barbequers. One of them has peculiar marks on his face.

EXT. BOBBY CASE’S HOME, BACKYARD – DAY

From behind the bushes, the two men watch Bobby Case grilling. Switters sits behind him.

SWITTERS
You know I think Audubon Poe is mixed up in all of this.

BOBBY CASE
Poe? That mercenary? What would make you think that?

SWITTERS
It was something Potney said before he bit the big one.
BOBBY CASE
I thought you said he touched it?

SWITTERS
Oh for Chrissake, Bobby! This is serious. No, just before he ran into me he said he saw Audubon Poe. Now what would Poe be doing in Peru?

BOBBY CASE
Since he left the program Poe’s long arm of nefariousness reaches around the globe. He was probably involved in some drug deal or human slave trafficking.

SWITTERS
Still, that’s quite a coincidence. I wouldn’t be surprised if Poe knew a thing or two about this whole business. Do you know where I could find him?

BOBBY CASE
Last I heard he was running arms out of Turkey. If you want to talk to him I could send out feelers.

SWITTERS
Thanks.

BOBBY CASE
Okay, so we’ve got a plan. You find out from Poe where this pyramid is and I’ll pop down to Peru and have a head-to-head with this End-of-Time character.

SWITTERS
Be careful, it’s pointed. Listen, there’s something else you can do for me. I just can’t bare to face my dear Maestra with news of her ill-fated parrot. And I certainly don’t want Suzy to see me in my present state. My age is already an issue in our relationship. Could you reach out to them for me?

BOBBY CASE
Say that you’re indefinitely detained on some secret mission?
SWITTERS

Exactly.

BOBBY CASE

No worries. We’ll get you out of this yet. Soon you’ll be singing *Accentuate the Positive* at the Days Inn in Okinawa, up to your knees in pussy and this whole mess will be behind you.

SWITTERS

I certainly hope so. Meantime, what do we do about the Russians in the hedges?

BOBBY CASE

I saw them. Are they Russian? Because I thought they might be ours.

SWITTERS

No, definitely Russian. It’s this damn mole business. You’re not really taking it seriously, are you?

BOBBY CASE

I’m taking it very seriously.

SWITTERS

There’s no mole. It’s a myth. A witch hunt of John Ashcroft proportions.

They both SPIT ON THE GROUND.

BOBBY CASE

Maybe so. But if I find out there is a mole... . .

He mashes the burger into the grill and a flame flares up.

SWITTERS

Looks like it’s a bad day to be a mole. Can I use your john?

BOBBY CASE

Be my guest.

Switters wheels off and Bobby Case waves to the Russians behind the hedges.
INT. BOBBY CASE’S OFFICE — DAY

Switters wheels out of the bathroom. High up on the bookshelf a book is askew. He stands on the footrests, wheelchair wobbling, and takes it off the shelf — “MY LIFE IN THE CIA BY AUDUBON POE: AMORALITY, BETRAYAL AND IRRESPONSIBILITY IN MODERN DIPLOMACY”

Switters turns it over — a photo of the handsome, suntanned Poe is on the back cover. Bobby Case enters the room and he quickly puts the book back.

SWITTERS
Just stretching out the old legs.
Don’t want them to atrophy.

He runs in place on the foot-rests, the wheelchair pitching back and forth. Almost falling over, he grabs the shelf for balance.

BOBBY CASE
Forget that, look what just came down the wire. Hector Sumac’s dead.

He brings up a CIA webpage on the computer — scrolling down they see a photo of a smiling Hector Sumac and the headline: “AGENT DEAD IN LIMA” Further down is a PHOTO OF SWITTERS.

BOBBY CASE
Those idiots have put out the all-points for you. That makes you an endangered species in these parts. You better skedaddle because if the Russians know you’re here our own goons can’t be far behind.

SWITTERS
What should I do?

BOBBY CASE
I suggest you get the hell out of here.

SWITTERS
Can I borrow your car?

EXT. BOBBY CASE’S HOME — DAY

The garage door slowly opens and Bobby Case’s car pulls out, turning down the suburban street. Soon after, a car parked across the street follows.
EXT. BETHESDA STREET - DAY

Switters drives at a normal pace down the street, the tail following behind. He turns onto a main road and speeds up a bit. The tail also speeds up.

Driving down the main road, a line of dark federal sedans drive in the other direction. After a few moments they U-turn quickly and follow Switters and the Russians. Switters speeds up, his tails gaining.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Switters turns past the supermarket and into the large gated entrance to campus, the Russians and Feds right on his tail.

The cars drive down the main road, much faster than the speed limit and a CAMPUS SECURITY CAR joins the chase.

Switters turns quickly around a bend, SCREECHING the tires and bouncing loudly over speed bumps, disturbing the collegiate calm of the place and sending co-eds scattering.

Followed closely, Switters drives his car right over the lawn, around the cloisters and towards a corner where two large buildings meet.

It’s a dead-end. The protestors from the supermarket are there, lounging on the grass, their signs on the ground. They look up at the cars bearing down on them and SCATTER IN PANIC.

The car seems to pick out one of the students in particular -- the one who yelled at Bobby Case earlier -- corralling him one way and then another until he’s backed into a corner.

Before running him over, Switters SLAMS ON THE BRAKES SENDING MUD AND GRASS UP INTO THE STUDENT’S FACE BEFORE STOPPING RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.

The Feds, Russians and Campus police also stop behind the car, boxing it in.

The driver’s side door opens BUT INSTEAD OF SWITTERS STEPPING OUT IT’S BOBBY CASE who looks the student square in the eye.

BOBBY CASE

Punk bitch.
EXT. BOBBY CASE’S HOUSE - DAY

In the quiet, peaceful suburbs a taxi pulls up to the curb. Switters wheels himself down the driveway and opens the back door, throwing his crocodile-skin valise onto the seat. The TAXI DRIVER gets out to help him into the cab.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Sitting in the back seat with the breeze blowing through his hair, Switters flips through a royal flush of passports.

SWITTERS
Airport.

TAXI DRIVER
Where you fly today, sir?

SWITTERS
Turkey.

TAXI DRIVER
Ah, Turkey. Long way. Vacation there?

SWITTERS
Meet Arms Dealer there.

EXT. ANTALYA, TURKEY - DAY

An idyllic Mediterranean port town set around an ancient Roman harbor. Mopeds buzz past and tourists walk the streets. A mid-level hotel sits on a busy corner -- The Hotel Gül.

INT. HOTEL GÜL LOBBY - DAY

Switters sits in the lobby on a round settee wearing a blue pin-stripe suit doing the Le Monde crossword puzzle, his legs spread flat on the sofa. We recognize the two Russians in the corner with their eyes on Switters.

AUDUBON POE enters the hotel and sits next to Switters. He is an ex-James Bond type: not the debonair charming Roger Moore but the mean, badass Daniel Craig kind. A hardened veteran of many clandestine missions.

POE
Your mama’s so fat she sat on a rainbow and Skittles came out.
SWITTERS
Your mama’s so ugly the neighbors break into your house to close the curtains.

POE
So you’re Switters. Aren’t you the guy who knows seventy-five words for a woman’s vagina?

SWITTERS
Seventy-one. I wonder if that will be my claim to fame? The lone talent people will remember me by.

POE
The only reason I’m here is because Bobby Case put in a good word for you. What do you want?

SWITTERS
I have some questions.

POE
Not here. Let’s walk.

He gets up, expecting Switters to follow. When he doesn’t, Poe turns back. . .Switters is climbing into his wheelchair.

SWITTERS
Minor mishap in South America.

EXT. ANTALYA STREETS – DAY

Poe walks and Switters wheels down the streets bustling with tourists and gift shops. The Russians follow a block behind.

POE
So I assume the tail’s for you?

SWITTERS
Yes. I should tell you that Langley seems to think I might be some kind of mole.

POE
They’ve been talking about this bullshit Russian mole for years. I looked into it and there is no mole. It’s an old wives tale.
SWITTERS
My thoughts exactly. Wanna buy some ice cream cones to prevent any lip reading?

POE
It doesn’t matter.

SWITTERS
But aren’t you on CIA’s hit list?

POE
I put that rumor out myself. Figured if I made a public enough fuss they wouldn’t dare touch me, at least not in any obvious, violent way.

SWITTERS
That’s good. Nice play. Do you want to get ice cream anyway?

Poe stops.

POE
What do you want?

SWITTERS
Know anything about a stolen Peruvian pyramid?

POE
Sorry, I can’t help you.

He turns and walks away.

SWITTERS
What were you doing in Lima?

POE
Contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

SWITTERS
What did you talk to Potney about?

POE
None of your business.

SWITTERS
He’s dead, you know.

Poe stops. This rattles him.
POE

How?

SWITERS

Wandering fingers.

Poe looks back at the Russians who pretend to be window shopping. HE GRABS SWITERS BY THE WHEELCHAIR, SPINS HIM AROUND AND HOPS ON, KICKING THEM FORWARD LIKE A SKATEBOARD.

SWITERS (CONT.)

Wait a minute... .

They sail down the street at increasing speed. The Russians give chase but are slowed by tourists on the sidewalk.

Switters and Poe jump off the curb and onto the road, weaving through the cross-section of traffic. Poe alters directions by leaning left and right as they duck traffic.

Switters mostly screams.

They pick up speed as they roll further downhill towards the marina. At the end of the road a truck pulls out in front of them, blocking the road.

SWITERS (CONT.)

OH SHIT!

He reaches for the wheel but Poe grabs his hand.

POE

You’ll burn yourself.

Instead he takes Switters’ tie and uses it as a buffer to grab the wheel and turn them sharply to the right, bouncing off the truck and right towards a corner café.

Poe jumps off the wheelchair and runs ahead, sitting at a table and pulling the other chair away with one hand. Switters glides right into the space and stops.

Poe grabs two used coffee cups off another table and puts them down. Switters and Poe look like two ordinary café patrons.

SWITERS

You’re good.

The Russians run down the hill and right past the café.

POE

They’ll double back in a minute.

Let’s go.
He gets up and wheels Switters down a long alleyway that ends at the edge of the water. A dead end.

    SWITTERS
    The end of the line.

    POE
    Or the beginning.

Poe points out to the marina where a gleaming 90-foot yacht is anchored offshore — "THE BANALITY OF EVIL"

EXT. BANALITY OF EVIL DECK — DAY

Poe and Switters are on deck. Poe flips open the lid of the aft hold and jumps down into the storage area which has a small cooler surrounded by boxes of land-mines, gas-masks, machine guns, rocket launchers and grenades.

    SWITTERS
    Quite a collection.

Poe tosses up a bottle of champagne to Switters who snatches it out of the air.

EXT. BANALITY OF EVIL DECK — DAY

Poe sits on deck eating grapes and drinking champagne, which he pours for Switters.

    POE
    Potney did some occasional work for me. He was mostly incompetent but his knowledge of language and certain Arab tribes was useful to my operations. He was always trying to sell me some relic he pilfered from some museum or government. I never took him seriously and besides, stealing from governments is bad for business. But this time he said he had something special. I was down in South America anyway so I agreed to meet him, listened to his pyramid scheme, said "no thank you" and was on my way.

    SWITTERS
    Did he show you the pyramid?
POE
Didn’t have it with him. Said he hid it somewhere safe.

SWITTERS
Yes, he said that to me, too. Something about hiding it somewhere no man could get at it. What was the last thing he did for you?

POE
Come this way.

EXT. BANALITY OF EVIL STARBOARD DECK-- DAY

Poe and Switters look out at the rocky shore.

POE
The Kurdish people are the largest ethnic minority in the world without a home. They’ve endured persecution by any number of countries for centuries. The Syrian Kurds are particularly oppressed and have been working up to armed conflict for years. Armed conflict, you understand, is good for business.

He points to a spot ashore.

POE (CONT.)
Hatay, Turkey. On the Syrian border. Site of Alexander’s victory over the Persians and supposedly the beach where Jonah was spit out by the whale.

SWITTERS
If you believe in that kind of thing.

POE
What?

SWITTERS
Nothing, sorry. Continue.

POE
The Nomads carry my guns over
(MORE)
POE (cont’d)
those hills and across the border into Syria. Potney spoke most of the tribal languages of the region so he would go along and make sure the arms got to the buyers. That was his route.

SWITTERS
When was his last run?

POE
A few weeks ago. Just before Peru. I’ve got a new shipment going out and no one to deliver it. What do you think?

SWITTERS
I think my answer lies along that route.

The sun sets on the deck of the lolling ship and our merry arms-dealers and for the moment, just the moment, all seems well in the world.

EXT. HATAY HARBOR - EVENING

Surrounded by crates of arms, Poe rows a rubber boat towards shore. Switters sits across from him, his wheelchair folded behind.

POE
So tell me some words for vagina.

SWITTERS
Well personally I prefer Swedish: “slida”. Very onomatopoeic.

POE
Yes. It has a ring.

SWITTERS
Or the Japanese: “chitsu”. In Hebrew it’s “cusi”, so be careful your pronunciation when you order couscous in Jerusalem. But you’ll never catch me using the Welsh.

POE
What’s that?
SWITTERS 
"Llawes goch".

POE
What’s it in Turkish?

SWITTERS
Oh, I knew that. Wait it’ll come
to me. . .

EXT. HATAY BEACH – EVENING

Switters, Poe and a TRIBE OF BEDOUIN NOMADS are on a deserted beach on a small cove. The lights of the Banality of Evil glow offshore. The arms are loaded up on camels and the empty crates put back on Poe’s rowboat.

POE
You’re on your own from here.

SWITTERS
Thanks, Poe. I’ll be sure to remember you in my memoirs.

POE
Please don’t.

SWITTERS
Any advice on how to ingratiate myself with these fine desert men?

POE
Tell them a story. And keep your gun handy.

With the help of the Nomads, Poe shoves off and rows back towards the ship.

SWITTERS
Oh, I remember the Turkish.
(cupping his hands)
"DOLYOLU"! "DOLYOLU"!!

He turns around and looks at the men: a tough, rugged lot who stare at him. Switters realizes his mistake (he has just shouted “vagina” to a man in a language they probably understand). He smiles. A Nomad has a monkey on his shoulder.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Hello. Your monkey reminds me of the time when once, in Burma, my
(MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d)
friend Bobby Case and I were
strip-searched at a roadblock.
Rubber gloves were unavailable
there, you see, and the
militiamen, understandably not
wanting to foul their fingers,
had a pet monkey they’d trained
to do the job for them. He was a
smart little fellow—

NOMAD
We must go now, stop your talking.

SWITTERS
Okay.

EXT. TURKISH DESERT – DAY

Under a brutal sun, the caravan moves single file across the
mountain ridge. Switters sits on a camel, wheelchair strapped
to the back, fishing through his valise and pulls out a gun.

SWITTERS
Hello, Mister Glock.

IT SLIPS OUT OF HIS HAND, BOUNCES OFF THE CAMEL AND FALLS TO
THE GROUND. The Nomads laugh -- one of them picks up the gun
and tucks it into his tunic.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Okay.
(loudly, so everyone can hear)
MY GIFT TO YOU!

Switters takes out his satellite phone and is more careful
with it as he dials a number and listens to it ring. Maestra
answers. CROSS CUT BETWEEN HER HOME AND HIS CAMEL --

MAESTRA
This better be good.

SWITTERS
Maestra my dear, how are you?
It’s Switters, your adoring
wandering grandson.

MAESTRA
What do you want?
SWITTERS
Just checking in. Wanted to see how things are in your neck of the universe. Or perhaps I’m just feeling a bit homesick.

MAESTRA
What have you done with my parrot, you indignant relation? And think very carefully before you answer. Your life may depend on it.

SWITTERS
Sailor Boy? Oh yes, I forgot to tell you that I released him. I have the video, just editing it down a bit.

MAESTRA
Where did you release him?

SWITTERS
Just where we had planned, in the Peruvian Amazon. After a moment’s hesitation he burst from his cage and with one final look back flew up into the great jungle beyond.

MAESTRA
Really?

SWITTERS
Cross my heart. He’s probably kamikaze mating with some parakeet half his age right now.

MAESTRA
Hmmm.

SWITTERS
Cheer up. You are beginning to sound like a camel. Are you aware that a camel’s hump is just a load of fat?

MAESTRA
Then it’s the same as a woman’s breast.

SWITTERS
Oh no, dear Maestra, a woman’s
(MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d)
breast is a miniature moon. It’s made out of moon paste and warm snow and honey.

MAESTRA
You romantic fool.

SWITTERS
How’s Suzy?

MAESTRA
I believe our young Suzy has acquired a boyfriend.

SWITTERS
No!

MAESTRA
She’s been attracting the attention from boys for some time, which I’m sure is no news flash to you, but since your absence she seems to have released many of her inhibitions.

SWITTERS
Why are you torturing me?

MAESTRA
It’s time, Switters, to renounce your adolescent fixations. Don’t worry, her purity is still intact. Truthfully, she finds all this attention distracting from her studies. I dare say there will come a time when she will long for that attention.

She sighs.

SWITTERS
Maestra, you are a nymph of the sea and stars. And you will always be the most desirable woman in Seattle’s Magnolia District.

MAESTRA
I’m not a lobster so stop trying to butter me up. I want to see that videotape. Why do you always have a way of making me feel like your lying?
SWITTERS
Professional courtesy. I will get you a copy of that entrancing video just as soon as I find a post office. I must go now. You are in my thoughts.

MAESTRA
Where are you going?

Switters thinks for a moment, looking off into the barren pancake desert beyond the mountains.

SWITTERS
To the opera!

EXT. DESERT OASIS - EVENING

The Nomads set up camp for the night along a small pond and build sandpit fires. Switters watches the men help each other: brush down their loads, gather twigs for the fire, set up tents and prepare the food. One of the Nomads brings Switters some food on a plate.

SWITTERS
You are all family?

NOMAD
Yes. That is my father, these are my brothers and cousins and those who have married into my family.

SWITTERS
Quite a set-up you have here.

NOMAD
We are a happy people.
   (making a fist)
   And we are together.

SWITTERS
I can see that. Tell me, there was another man who traveled with you from time-to-time. Heavyset British chap. Did you ever see him carrying a pyramid about yay big?

NOMAD
No. He was like you but different.

SWITTERS
How?
NOMAD
I cannot say. Only that the others, the rest of my family, think you are very strange.

SWITTERS
They may not be wrong.

NOMAD
What is life for you in America? Why are you different than other men from your place?

SWITTERS
Well, most American men secretly hate women and love golf. I love women and hate golf.

NOMAD
What is gawwf?

SWITTERS
Exactly.

NOMAD
What brings you to the desert? What do you seek?

SWITTERS
I'm just trying to stay out of trouble.

The Nomad studies his face for a moment and then laughs.

NOMAD
I like you. I like you, strange American.

EXT. SYRIAN DESERT - DAY

Deeper into the desert, our caravan trudges onwards. Switters drips the last drops of water into his mouth and takes out his cellphone, typing a text.

HE TYPES -- "BOYFRIEND?"

RESPONSE -- "FB"

SWITTERS
FB? . . .FB. . . .Fuck Buddy! No!

BEEP, more texts come in and he reads them aloud.
SWITTERS (CONT.)
“Just joking”
(BEEP)
“LMAO. Laughing My Ass Off”
(BEEP)
“Rolling On The Floor Laughing”

Switters sighs, typing a response.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Please Retain Your Virginity. PRYV?

The Nomad comes up beside him.

NOMAD
Hello American! I have spoken to
my father the Khan and he offers
you to stay with us.

SWITTERS
(pocketing the phone)
Thanks but I’ve got a mortgage
back in Seattle.

NOMAD
My father the Khan offers you one
of his daughters.

He motions to four veiled women riding camel-back behind them.
They blush and giggle.

SWITTERS
That is a very flattering offer.
Tell your father they are very
beautiful.

NOMAD
Yes, they are!

SWITTERS
But I have to say no.

NOMAD
Is this Moogage woman your wife?

SWITTERS
You could say that. Thirty-year
fixed-rate. ’Til death do us part.

NOMAD
She will not be happy with you?
SWITERS
No. Besides, I don’t think your sisters will understand my sense of humor. Every bon mot, every wise crack will fall on deaf ears. I couldn’t live under that particular tent.

The Nomad laughs.

NOMAD
You are right, American. They are not very funny at all.

They pass a large, walled-in compound. From within we hear SOUNDS OF WOMEN’S LAUGHTER. Switters looks over.

NOMAD (CONT.)
Oh no, American. This is a place where no man can enter.

SWITERS
What did you just say?

NOMAD
In this place only women inside. No man can enter.

SWITERS
I’ll be damned.

Switters stops his camel.

SWITERS (CONT.)
No man can enter. . . a nunnery. Potney you son of a bitch.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONVENT – DAY

Switters wheels himself up to the large wooden gate which blocks the entrance to the walled compound. There is a large bell and bellrope with a sign in Arabic, French and English:

"TRADESMEN RING THREE TIMES, THOSE IN NEED RING TWICE, THE GODLESS SHOULD NOT RING AT ALL"

Switters RINGS ONCE.

The laughter stops.

Switters RINGS FOUR TIMES.
No answer. He looks around -- he is alone and there is absolutely nothing for miles in either direction.

He backs up and propels himself forward, SLAMMING INTO THE DOOR. Nothing. He backs up and SLAMS INTO IT AGAIN, pounding on the door with his fists.

Very high up on the door a peephole slides open.

WOMAN

Qu’est-ce que vous cherchez?

SWITTERS
What am I looking for? The International House of Pancakes, must have taken the wrong exit.

The peephole closes and Switters hears a commotion behind the door. The peephole opens again and this time another set of eyes appear, this one belonging to an IRISH WOMAN.

IRISH WOMAN
What’s your business here?

SWITTERS
I don’t have any business. I was just in the neighborhood and thought I’d drop by. May I come in?

IRISH WOMAN
Dreadfully sorry but we can’t let you in at the moment. Masked Beauty has said not to let anyone in under any circumstances.

SWITTERS
Masked Beauty? Are you pirates?

IRISH WOMAN
You’re not from the Church?

SWITTERS
Hardly. Not my end of the field. What’s your name, little darling?

IRISH WOMAN
(biting her lip)
Sorry sir, but you’ll have to go away.

She slams the peephole closed.
SWITTERS
No, wait! It’s hot as hell out here! How about a little sustenance? Not very charitable for Church people, if you ask me!

He wheels himself over the stony ground to the minimal shade of a cypress tree, his back to the compound.

AN ORANGE COMES FLYING OVER THE WALL, LANDING NEXT TO HIM.
Beat.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Thank you!

ANOTHER COMES OVER, HITTING HIM IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONVENT - DAY

The sun beats down on Switters -- it’s brutal, heat-stroking weather. Orange peels are on the ground around him and his lips are parched. Even when his eyelids are closed he cannot block out the bright sun.

He opens them to see a BEAUTIFUL NUN (mid-forties) looking down at him with stunning eyes.

SWITTERS
I love you.

NUN
(with a slight French accent)
You are out of your cotton-pickin’ mind.

He closes his eyes again.

INT. CONVENT BEDROOM - DAY

Switters wakes up. The beautiful nun is squeezing water from a rag into a basin. Her name is DOMINO.

DOMINO
You’re awake. The fever seems to be going down.

SWITTERS
Thanks to you, I’m sure.
She sits on the bed next to him, placing the wet rag on his forehead. He studies her face.

**DOMINO**
You must thank God, not me.

**SWITTERS**
Don’t you find it a bit batty that people believe God, the epitome of enlightenment, could be so puffed up with human vanity that he’d expect us to sing his praises at every opportunity and twice on Sunday?

**DOMINO**
Have you traveled by wheelchair through the Syrian desert in order to debate theology, Mister-

**SWITTERS**
Just Switters. Do you get a lot of visitors? Do you have any kind of relics here? Preferably triangular in shape.

She stops.

**DOMINO**
Why did you come here?

**SWITTERS**
I’m just a curious traveler wandering down the camel path of life. I didn’t catch your name?

**DOMINO**
Around here I’m called Domino. Or just Sister.

**SWITTERS**
And you’re American. But spent some time in France. Paris, I’d say.

**DOMINO**
I was raised in Philadelphia and lived in Paris for a while. We must get you better so you can move on your way. The supply truck comes every two weeks. You can get (MORE)
DOMINO (cont’d)
a ride back to Damascus or whatever your final destination.

SWITTERS
I have to tell you I’m surprised someone from the City of Brotherly Love could be so inhospitable. It’s a cruel wasteland out there.

DOMINO
Don’t take it personally or doubt our Christian charities. The Pachomian Order is an Eden here in the desert. But it’s an Eden for Eves only, I’m afraid.

SWITTERS
An Adamless Eden? I’ll have to mull that one over. What about a serpent?

DOMINO
No. No serpent here either I’m afraid.

Switters touches her forearm.

SWITTERS
But every Paradise has a serpent.

DOMINO
Not this one.

INT. CONVENT BEDROOM – DAY

Switters lies in bed. The door opens and Domino enters, bringing him a bowl of soup.

DOMINO
You seem to be on the mend. I’m afraid it’s not much, but Italian night isn’t until next week.

She sits down next to him with the soup and spoon-feeds him.

SWITTERS
I’m sorry if I’m any kind of a burden.
DOMINO
Well, you must be attended to and nobody else here speaks English except for Fannie, our Irish lass, and I wouldn’t trust her alone with you.

SWITERS
Is it her you don’t trust or me?

DOMINO
Neither of you, frankly.

SWITERS
How many nuns are in your Order?

DOMINO
Nine of us in total, including the Mother Superior, my aunt Masked Beauty. We are an unusual Order. We believe in free will and common sense and compassion. We’re allowed to rename ourselves not after women we were taught to admire but our dream names, the ones we never told anyone.

SWITERS
Hence Domino and Masked Beauty.

DOMINO
Yes and Mustang Sally, Fannie who spoke to you at the gate, Pippi, ZuZu and Bob.

SWITERS
Bob?

DOMINO
You’ll have to ask her. What about your faith, Mr. Switters? What do you believe in?

SWITERS
Uhm, well I try not to.

DOMINO
Ooh-la-la. You don’t believe in anything?

SWITERS
My faith is whatever makes me feel good about being alive.
DOMINO
Then you are alone.

SWITTERS
You bet your sweet tootsies I am.

DOMINO
You’re out of your cotton-pickin’ mind.

SWITTERS
I hate to tell you, but as charming as I find your attempt to be a hip-American, nobody says cotton-pickin’ anymore.

DOMINO
Well I do! And that means somebody still says it.

She drops the spoon in the soup, gets up and leaves, slamming the door behind her. Switters lies back in bed and hits his head with his hand.

SWITTERS
Switters, you idiot.

INT. CONVENT BEDROOM - DAY

Switters, naked, is propped up on his knees on the wheelchair looking out the window at the courtyard below where nuns go about their duties. He watches them closely: sweeping and feeding the chickens as he talks on his phone with Bobby Case.

SWITTERS
The pyramid is here somewhere, I know it. Now I just need to find it.

BOBBY CASE
Hilarious. Holed up with nine nuns in the Syrian desert? Imagine the possibilities!

SWITTERS
I’m glad you find the situation amusing. How’s the head-hunting?

BOBBY CASE
I’ve been up and down this damned river in my low-flying twin-engine (MORE)
BOBBY CASE (cont’d)
Cessna thirty times and no one has
seen this tribe. They seem to have
just vanished.

EXT. MAESTRA’S SEATTLE HOME – DAY

Instead of flying a twin-engine Cessna down the Peruvian
Amazon, Bobby Case is instead lurking in the bushes outside
Maestra’s home. He approaches a window and opens it from the
outside while talking to Switters on his cellphone.

SWITTERS
Funny, it sounds awfully quiet
for a Cessna.

BOBBY CASE
Noise cancellation headphones.
I’ll get you a pair.

He climbs through the window into Switters’ bedroom and begins
looking through his things -- bookshelf, desk and drawers.

BOBBY CASE (CONT.)
Don’t you worry, I’ll find
this End-of-Time character and
when I do I’ll give him a little
taste of American justice.

SWITTERS
Just be sure he lifts the curse
before you do anything rash.

INT. HALLWAY – DAY

Bobby Case sneaks down the hallway with Switters’ laptop under
his arm. He stops at an open door. Through the crack he sees a
female leg shaving in the bath. He stops and leers.

SWITTERS
There’s another thing. There’s a
nun here. She’s really, I don’t
know, kind of intriguing. I feel
like a school-kid talking like
this. . .

The bathroom door swings open and Bobby is exposed, with
Switters laptop under his arm.
INT. CONVENT BEDROOM - DAY

Switters hears a female SCREAM.

SWITTERS (CONT.)

Bobby? Bobby?

The door opens and Fannie walks in with Switters’ food. She sees his naked butt and SCREAMS, dropping the tray. He hangs up the phone and twists around, covering himself up. Fannie hides her eyes, trying to pick up the food.

SWITTERS
Sorry. Could you please hand me my clothes?

EXT. CONVENT GARDEN - DAY

Switters, now fully dressed and in his wheelchair, wheels up to Domino who is planting vegetables in the garden.

SWITTERS
I would like to apologize if I offended you in any way.

DOMINO
That’s alright.

He holds the bag of seeds out for her.

DOMINO (CONT.)
I hear you gave Fannie quite a scare.

SWITTERS
Yes, I’m afraid I may have shocked her.

DOMINO
I doubt it. She wants to fuck your brains out.

Switters drops the bag and tries to put the seeds back inside.

DOMINO (CONT.)
Do they not still use that expression in Philadelphia anymore?

SWITTERS
Just caught me off guard a bit,

(MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d)
that’s all. I didn’t expect, well, a nun to use that expression.

DOMINO
And well you shouldn’t. I don’t even like to think about it, but we don’t encourage our Sisters to repress any of their desires. She likes you. She’s young and attractive and while you’re waiting for the convoy to arrive you should know that you are both free to do whatever you like.

SWITTERS
Well I don’t like, thank you very much.

DOMINO
Don’t you find her appealing?

SWITTERS
She’s not so bad. But I guess I thought maybe you and I-

DOMINO
Ooh-la-la! No, no. That’s ridiculous!

SWITTERS
Why, don’t you find me appealing?

DOMINO
You’re not so bad. But you’re not my type.

SWITTERS
How do you know?

DOMINO
You haven’t found maturity yet. You are not at peace.

SWITTERS
Well I’m working on it! Damn, you sure know how to break a guy’s heart.

DOMINO
The pain of love does not break hearts, it merely seasons them.

(MORE)
DOMINO (cont’d)
We here at the Order have always worked to build strong spirits. Spirits that cannot be broken. You will be here for a few days, why don’t you try and make the most of rebuilding yours?

SWITTERS
With your help?

DOMINO
I believe that through prayer, Christian ritual and good old-fashioned elbow-grease even the most brazen heathen can find peace.

SWITTERS
So you think I have a chance?

She looks at him askew.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Why don’t we start with a stroll around the grounds? I wish to know every nook and cranny of this place.

EXT. CONVENT COURTYARD - DAY
Domino pushes Switters around the compound. On the ground, next to the gate is a pair of long wooden poles.

SWITTERS
What are those?

DOMINO
Those? Uhm, in French they’re called les échasses, I can’t remember the English. The gates were made too tall so the nuns use them to look through the peephole.

SWITTERS
Stilts! Of course! Why didn’t I think of that? Can I try them out?

DOMINO
What exactly is your malady, Mr. Switters?
EXT. CONVENT COURTYARD - LATER

Switters tries walking on huge 10-foot tall stilts. He hobbles back and forth, almost falling. Domino can’t help but laugh as she stands under him, making sure he doesn’t fall.

Switters is getting the hang of it. He takes a few steps forward, looks up AND SEES FANNIE IN HER SECOND STORY BEDROOM.

SHE’S HOLDING THE PYRAMID WHICH SHE WRAPS IN A PACKAGE AND PUTS IN HER DRESSER DRAWER.

Switters gapes, trying to hold still.

Fannie looks out the window and sees him -- they are at eye level to each other.

SHE SCREAMS

Switters loses his balance and falls backwards, landing right on top of Domino. They are face-to-face, laughing.

SWITTERS

Nice catch.

DOMINO

We couldn’t let your feet touch the ground.

SWITTERS

So you believe in the curse?

DOMINO

No, but you do. And if you believe in something other than what’s right in front of you then that’s a kind of a faith. What’s the expression? Whatever floats your boat?

Switters shifts, wincing. He has an erection.

DOMINO (CONT.)

What’s that?

SWITTERS

Nothing.

DOMINO

I can feel that.

SWITTERS

My boat.
EXT. OUTSIDE CONVENT GATE - DAY

A large package sits outside the gate. The gate opens slightly and the package is dragged inside.

EXT. CONVENT COURTYARD - DAY

Switters rips open the box. Inside is a note on CIA stationary: “Merry X-mass from your buddy Santa Case”

SWITTERS
A jetpack?
(inside he sees a SEGWAY)
Cool.

INT. CONVENT DINING HALL - EVENING

Italian Night. Switters and the nine nuns sit around two long wooden tables lit with candles and covered in red-and-white checkered tablecloths. Light Italian music plays on an old CD player in the corner.

Switters glares at Fannie who turns away. Domino watches the exchange.

SWITTERS
God is a fixed point, eternal and absolute, right? It’s the way we view God that changes over history. Sometimes he’s personal, other times aloof, baritone and vengeful. So for me the key is not to get stuck on one idea. To have a certain flexibility. More wine?

He offers the wine to an elderly nun next to him (MASKED BEAUTY, wearing a veil covering her face) who declines but Switters helps himself to a healthy pour.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
This really is terrific wine. Did you make it with your feet?

MASKED BEAUTY
Domino was right. You are a fool. But you’re an interesting fool.

SWITTERS
Thank you. So why are you called Masked Beauty?
MASKED BEAUTY
Well Mister Switters, I was once considered the most beautiful woman in Paris. Everywhere I went men stared at me. My beauty was becoming a distraction. So I prayed to the Almighty until I was granted an end to my suffering.

She pulls away her veil to reveal... a woman who in her advanced age retains much of her beauty except for a GIANT MOLE ON THE TIP OF HER NOSE.

SWITTERS
Whoah! That’s one powerful prayer.

MASKED BEAUTY
It’s a gift from God.

SWITTERS
Are you sure about that?

MASKED BEAUTY
The more I prayed, the larger the mole became.

SWITTERS
Think you might’ve gone too far?

She smiles and replaces her veil.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
What’s a mole like you doing in a place like this? Well, I’d like to make a toast!

He pours another healthy glass. Domino looks horrified.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
I’ve spent the greater part of my adult life in the company of men. Rebels, dreamers, soldiers-of-fortune, out-of-work mercenaries and vagabond scholars. But tonight, Italian night, I salute you nuns, who give your hearts to a man from a distant time and place whom they love beyond everything else. It’s the nun who lives most purely and with the least self-serving compromise. To all nuns! The most romantic people on earth.
A weak smattering of applause. Switters downs his drink.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Now I’d like to talk about James Joyce. . .

INT. CONVENT DINING HALL — EVENING

Only three nuns are left. Broadway showtunes play from Switters’ CD and Fannie and another nun (Pippi) dance together in the middle of the. Switters and Domino sit at separate tables, watching them dance.

DOMINO
Are you drunk?

SWITTERS
Sobriety, for some people, is a thin and temporary disguise. No, I am not. Just a little. So Fanny must be the one who has contact with the outside.

DOMINO
Yes. She’s the most comfortable interacting with laymen so she goes to town for our little errands between supply trucks. Why do you ask?

SWITTERS
No reason.

DOMINO
Would you believe that I haven’t danced since my Junior Prom in Philadelphia.

SWITTERS
You’re kidding? Would you like to dance?

DOMINO
What about your curse?

SWITTERS
If you’ll bring your table together with mine I think we can give it a whirl.
They bring their tables together and he leaps up, extending a
hand out to her. She takes it and they dance to the song
“STRANGER IN PARADISE”.

MUSIC

*Take my haaaand
I’m a stranger in paradise
All lost in a wonderland
a stranger in paradise
If I stand starry-eyed
that’s the danger of paradise
for mortals who stand beside
an angel like you...*

At first she keeps her distance but Switters whirls her around
and dips her a bit and she relaxes into his embrace.

DOMINO
Thank you.

SWITTERS
It’s my birthday tonight.

DOMINO
What?

SWITTERS
Funny I remembered, usually I
forget.

DOMINO
Are you serious?

SWITTERS
Yes.

DOMINO
You’re not pulling my leg?

SWITTERS
No, it really is my birthday.

DOMINO
Don’t you celebrate it?

SWITTERS
Not in a long time. When’s yours?

DOMINO
It was back in July.

SWITTERS
And how did you celebrate?
DOMINO
We had Italian night.

They smile.

DOMINO (CONT.)
But then around midnight I got up and went out into the desert to try and count the stars. Astronomers claim the human eye can see no more than five thousand stars at one time but I swear I counted twenty thousand. It was a splendid celebration.

SWITTERS
I should have like to have done that for my birthday, counting stars. Maybe next year.

She stops.

DOMINO
Meet me at the front gate at ten-thirty.

SWITTERS
I’m free. Just have one thing to do first.

INT. FANNIE’S BEDROOM ROOM – EVENING

Switters sneaks into the room on his Segway. He has trouble maneuvering -- banging into things and getting stuck in the corner.

The room is a barren space with only a bed, a dresser with a cross nailed to the wall over it. He glides over to the dresser and opens up the drawer -- no package. He opens another drawer -- it’s filled with sexy underwear. He holds up a particularly lacey pair.

SWITTERS
As Bobby Case would say, imagine the possibilities.

FANNIE
Can I help you?

He spins around to see Fannie standing in the doorway.
SWITTERS
Uhm, I was just looking for... a good time?

She approaches him with lust in her eyes. He backs up, the Segway humming to life.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Although in my fragile state, that might not be such a good idea.

FANNIE
I want to-

SWITTERS
I know, I’ve heard. Word travels fast around here.

She moves on him and he backs up, maneuvering the Segway towards the door. But she blocks it.

SWITTERS
Please, I don’t want to hurt you.

FANNIE
But I want you to.

SWITTERS
Please, you’re a nun! Okay, wait! Turn around and I’ll take off your habit.

She does, but instead of undressing her he pinches the back of her neck, making her collapse on the ground.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Sorry. But I’ve already got a date.

EXT. TOWER - DAY

The Segway rests at the bottom of the ladder. On the roof of the tower is the incredible layout Domino has prepared -- Persian carpets and silk pillows under a star-filled sky. Switters and Domino lie on their backs looking up at the truly breathtaking stars.

DOMINO
How many have you counted?

SWITTERS
Four. My mind keeps wandering.
DOMINO
I love the desert. It’s the place
I feel closest to my breath and
the breath of God. Although I do
miss Christmas in Paris.

SWITTERS
I love Paris in the Springtime.
When it sizzles. Thank you for my
birthday gift. It may be the best
anyone has ever given me.

DOMINO
Oh, but this is not your gift.

SWITTERS
No? You mean there’s more?

She rolls over on her stomach so they are face-to-face. She
hides her face in her hand.

DOMINO
I am so embarrassed.

SWITTERS
What is it?

DOMINO
My mother liked Doris Day, okay?

She takes a deep breath and starts singing.

DOMINO (CONT.)
(singing)
Someone like you cures
everything gloomy turns wrong
into right brightens the night
brings happiness to me...Someday I’ll find

She opens her palms and moves her hands back and forth,
minstrel-like.

DOMINO (CONT.)
(laughing and singing)
someone I can boast to
somebody to hug, a bug in a rug
to snuggle up close to and
whenever I do do you know who
who who I’ll give the most to
you prey on my mind stay ‘til
I find someone like you.
She breaks down laughing, as does he.

They kiss.

It is a blissful, star-filled, wide-eyed laughing kiss and when they separate a thin trail of saliva links them before snapping and they both laugh some more. Switters rolls onto his back and looks up at the stars.

SWITTERS
Okay, now I’m counting them.

Domino props up on her elbow, her head resting on her hand.

DOMINO
You know you said you were in love with me the first time we met.

SWITTERS
No, did I?

DOMINO
Yes. It is the first thing you ever said to me.

SWITTERS
Well I don’t remember but in boxing circles they call that leading with the right.

DOMINO
It’s alright. I have a big crash on you along.

SWITTERS
Crush. You mean you had a big crush on me.

DOMINO
Maybe.

She lies on her back.

DOMINO (CONT.)
When I was in high school in Philadelphia I was, how do you say?

SWITTERS
A drum majorette?
DOMINO
No, a slut. Everyone wanted to touch me and I quickly learned how to please them without, you know, allowing everything. Only my basketball teacher I ever allowed to make love to me.

SWITTERS
You really don’t need to spill these kind of beans.

DOMINO
Listen, I must explain. When my family moved back to France, I threw myself with whole heart into the arms of the Church. Then I began to pray for the reinstatement of my virginity. Crazy, no? But like my aunt, I prayed and prayed and after a long time it grew back.

SWITTERS
You mean your maidenhood?

DOMINO
My hymen. God gave it back to me. It’s true, I have medical proof. Many doctors examined me and agree. Okay, no big cotton-pickin’ deal but it is proof of the power of belief. And that is enough philosophy for one night and now we can kiss again.

She kisses him and reaches down to unbutton his pants.

SWITTERS
Be careful. You remember what happened to the last person who did that.

DOMINO
I’ll take the risk. Just count the stars.

SWITTERS
You know it just occurred to me a way that you can still retain your virginity.
DOMINO

How is that?

SWITTERS

Ever heard of the culo?

They kiss again as we PULL UP TO THE TWINKLING STARS ABOVE.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONVENT WALLS - DAY

Switters zips around on the Segway, practicing his turns -- he’s really getting good. The Convent gate opens and Fannie steps out, holding basket.

Switters hides behind the cypress tree. She closes the gate behind her and walks down the hill towards the village. Switters follows at a discrete distance.

EXT. SYRIAN VILLAGE MARKET - DAY

Switters follows her through the open-air market. He tries to blend into the crowd as best he can however for this small, Syrian village a Segway is a curiosity.

Village folk surround him but he waves them off, picking up speed and trying to outrun them but they follow behind.

He turns a corner and sees FANNIE TALKING WITH AUDUBON POE.

SWITTERS

Poe?

Poe grabs at her basket and shakes it loose. A few vegetables roll onto the ground and he grabs Fannie by the arms.

The crowd gathers around Switters. He shoos them off, but in doing so KNOCKS SOME COPPER PLATES OFF A STORE’S SHELF.

Poe and Fannie look over.

Fannie runs off and Poe RUNS RIGHT AT SWITTERS, drawing his gun. Switters backs up, fleeing down the alley.

EXT. MARKET ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

He doesn’t get far. Poe JUMPS ON HIS BACK and the extra weight sends the Segway careening forward and out of control down the people-filled marketplace.
Switters reaches back and tries to shake him off as they wrestle for control. Poe ducks.

Switters turns forward and GETS HIT SMACK ON THE FACE WITH LOW-HANGING FISH ON STRING. HE IS HIT BY ANOTHER AND ANOTHER until he ducks down out of the way, the Segway propelling forward at full speed and into a narrow shop where an OLD ARABIC MAN beats them with a rolled-up newspaper.

INT. OLD MAN’S SHOP - CONTINUOUS

They barrel through the narrow shop packed floor-to-ceiling with touristy items (the Segway pulling everything down and trailing it all behind them) hit some rugs hanging in back with full-force, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, sending clouds of dust in their faces. They surprise the Old Man’s son watching tv in the back, duck to avoid the power cord and burst through the back of the store.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The Segway barrels out of the shop and down the alley, dragging the TV and all the touristy goods behind like a just married train. Poe and Switters WRESTLE AND TRADE PUNCHES, each grabbing for control.

The Segway heads towards a delicately constructed pile of spices and nuts. They CRASH INTO IT, sending nuts scattering and the spice pile collapsing on top of them. Switters is careful not to let his feet touch the ground.

They fight and roll around in the spices, covering themselves in colors. Poe jumps up and levels his gun at Switters.

POE

Where is it?

SWITTERS

I don’t know, I swear. Who are you working for?

POE

Sorry about this.

Poe cocks back the hammer of the gun.

Switters holds up his hands in useless defense.

POE SNEEZES.
SWITTERS KICKS THE GUN OUT OF HIS HAND AND THEN KICKS POE IN THE CHEST, sending him falling backwards into the street. Switters jumps on the Segway and takes off at full speed. Poe grabs his gun and follows.

Switters turns a corner and stops.

Dead end.

Poe comes running around the corner and stops. He’s got him.

Switters goes to the far end of the alley, grabs a long hookah pipe, tucking it under his arm like a jousting and turns back.

Poe levels his gun.

Switters heads straight for Poe.

POE FIRES. . . SWITTERS DUCKS, THE BULLET RICOCHETING OFF THE SEGWAY WHICH CONTINUES RIGHT AT POE, the hookah knocking him off his feet and the gun out of his hand.

The gun flies up in the air and Switters grabs it as he continues out of the alley, bouncing around in his hand until he’s got a handle on it and turns a corner into an open market full of people. Switters looks back to see Poe on the ground.

Switters smiles -- until he faces forward to see a CAMEL RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.

SWITTERS SMACKS INTO THE CAMEL, knocking him off the Segway and onto his back. He holds his feet off the ground, looking up at the underbelly of the growling camel.

A crowd of people gather around him.

He sees Poe get up and, unable to harm Switters with all the people around, back away from the scene. THE CAMEL LOWERS HIS FACE RIGHT OVER SWITTERS AND DROOLS ON HIM.

SWITTERS
Who do you think I am, John Ashcroft?

EXT. CONVENT - DAY

A supply truck is parked out front and a man in a red-and-white checkered kafiah unloads boxes and carries them into the convent. Switters goes through the open gate.
EXT. CONVENT COURTYARD - DAY

Switters drives up to Domino.

    DOMINO
    Where have you been?

    SWITTERS
    Oh, just down to the market.

    DOMINO
    What did you do to Fannie?

    SWITTERS
    I didn’t touch the girl, I swear. Why, what did she say?

    DOMINO
    She didn’t. She’s gone.

    SWITTERS
    Gone? What do you mean?

    DOMINO
    She never came back from the market and when we looked in her room all her belongings were gone.

    SWITTERS
    No note?

    DOMINO
    Nothing.

    SWITTERS
    Darn.

    DOMINO
    What’s going on? Who are you?

    SWITTERS
    I am Switters, as I say.

She looks at him, skeptically.

    SWITTERS (CONT.)
    Alright, I’m looking for an ancient pagan-looking pyramid. Also, the Russian and American Intelligence services may be after me about some other mole nonsense, something completely unrelated.
DOMINO
A pyramid? Oh, we have one of those.

SWITTERS
Excuse me?

DOMINO
Sure. It’s in the pantry.

INT. CONVENT PANTRY - DAY

Amidst the wine bottles and canned food is a desk covered in papers and books. Switters and Domino watch Masked Beauty dig through its drawers.

MASKED BEAUTY
Fannie said it was a family heirloom and asked me to keep it somewhere safe.

SWITTERS
When was this?

MASKED BEAUTY
This morning. Before she left for the market. Here it is.

She pulls out the newspaper-wrapped package and hands it to Switters who carefully unwraps it. And there it is: **the small golden pyramid Potney stole from the Kremlin**. Switters holds it up and turns it over in his hands.

DOMINO
What is it?

SWITTERS
I don’t know. Something very dangerous. Something you don’t want to have around here.

DOMINO
How do you know about this? And think about your answer. Because it better be the truth.

Switters takes a deep breath.

SWITTERS
I work for the CIA.
MASKED BEAUTY
CIA? Ooh-la-la!

SWITTERS
I guess I should probably say I used to. They seem to think I’m working for the other side.

DOMINO
They think you were lying to them?

SWITTERS
Yes, in effect.

DOMINO
I can’t imagine how they could think such a thing.

SWITTERS
Listen, it wasn’t my intention to lie to you. I just thought it would be safest. There are a lot of people after this thing and for your protection I wouldn’t keep it around for long.

DOMINO
I think we’ve had quite enough of your protection, Mr. Switters.

SWITTERS
That really is the only thing I’ve lied to you about, I swear.

DOMINO
You are insincere!

SWITTERS
Don’t say that.

DOMINO
A liar! You don’t mean anything. You say one thing and then another. You don’t know even when you are lying. You come here as a wolf in sheep’s clothing. I think it is best if you leave here at once.

SWITTERS
But I love you.
Masked Beauty’s eyes perk up.

**DOMINO**
Yes, that’s the first thing you said to me. I didn’t believe you then and I didn’t believe you now.

**SWITTERS**
Wait-

**DOMINO**
Get out. And do not come back. I do not wish to see you again.

She sticks out her hand -- he hands over the pyramid and she drops it back in the drawer, slamming it closed.

**INT. SUPPLY TRUCK - DAY**

The Segway bounces around in the back of the supply truck as it speeds down the dusty road. The driver is the man in the red-and-white kafiah, TOUFIC. Switters looks at him.

**SWITTERS**
Italian night?

Switters motions to his kafiah but the driver ignores him, staring at the road. Switters sighs, looking out the window.

**SWITTERS (CONT.)**
Women, Toufic. What are you going to do? I’ve been kicked out the Garden of Eden and I feel like a real snake. Do snakes have heels? If they did I’d feel like the heel of a snake. All over a stupid pyramid in an unlocked drawer.

**HE PULLS THE PYRAMID** out of his crocodile-skin valise.

**SWITTERS (CONT.)**
C’mon, admit it. You’d do the same. Between you and me I don’t feel great about this. Maybe when it’s all over I’ll find a way to make it up to them. You don’t care. I’m going to take a hot bath and lock the door and if the world wants in, well it’s going to have to knock pretty hard.
See, that’s the problem with you Americans. You get involved and when things get difficult you just go away.

Oh, you’re English is quite good. I didn’t realize.

Three years Lebanon University in Beirut.

Did you take any Modern Poetry?

I want to love America but America requires me to hate it. What is wrong with your great country? Why does it do such terrible things?

Three words: “genuine imitation leather”. First the cowboys wiped out the buffalo and then they built Wall Street. Then they had to make genuine imitation leather.

His cellphone BEEPS.

Hang on.

He takes it out and looks at a text message:

FROM SUZY -- “WHERE R U?”

He fumbles to respond -- “miss me?”

RESPONSE -- “WHAT HAPPENED TO MY PARROT, YOU DEGENERATE!”

Switters quickly tosses the phone back in the bag.

Sorry, what were you saying?

Americans are a generous and good
TOUFIC (cont’d)  
people, the ones I have met, but  
as a country I must oppose them.

SWITTERS  
It’s only natural. Terrorism is  
the only logical response to  
America just as street crime is  
the only logical response to  
America’s drug policy. But  
America has something special.  
It has bounce. It has snap.

The truck hits a BIG BOUNCE and the pyramid comes flying out  
of Switters’ hand onto the floor. He picks it up -- a panel  
has opened and electrical wires dangle out.

SWITTERS (CONT.)  
Now that’s interesting.

He picks up the pyramid and pulls out more and more wiring.

SWITTERS (CONT.)  
That’s very interesting.

EXT. GAS STATION – DAY  
Toufic fills up the truck as Switters sits with the door open,  
CONNECTING THE WIRING IN THE PYRAMID TO HIS VIDEO CAMERA AND  
REWINDING TO FOOTAGE OF SAILOR BOY IN HIS CAGE ON THE RIVER.

SWITTERS  
That’s it. Right there.

He looks up and sees TWO ARAB MEN who look suspiciously  
similar to Switters. . .The Russians.

Toufic talks with one of them, pointing back in the direction  
of the Convent, gets back in the car and starts the engine.

SWITTERS  
Hold your fucking camels, Toufic.  
What did that man say to you?

TOUFIC  
He asked if he was going in the  
right direction for the nuns.

SWITTERS  
That’s it. We’re going back. The  
nuns are in danger.
TOUFIC
I must go to Damascus.

SWITTERS
Then I’m going alone.

EXT. SYRIAN DESERT - DAY

Switters drives his Segway across the barren landscape at full speed, alone in the desert wilderness, holding his valise.

EXT. OUTSIDE CONVENT - DAY

As Switters approaches the entrance to the compound, he sees the car from the gas station parked out front and the gate broken open. Switters circles around to the back.

EXT. BACK OF CONVENT - DAY

Switters pulls up to the back wall. Reaching up, the top of the wall is just out of his grasp.

He backs up to get a running start.

HE FLOORS THE SEGWAY RIGHT TOWARDS THE WALL. . .IT HITS A ROCK, Sending him flying up in the air towards the wall, which he grabs with both arms.

The Segway crashes into the wall, smashing apart.

Switters pulls himself up over the wall with two arms hanging over the top, looking down into the courtyard where he sees one of the nuns (ZuZu) cowering behind the garden shed.

SWITTERS

ZUZU
Monsieur Switters!

SWITTERS
Quick. Bring me the stilts. The stilts. Les échasses.

ZUZU
Les échasses?

SWITTERS
Oui. The fucking circus is back in town.
EXT. CONVENT COURTYARD - DAY

The Russians stand around the frightened nuns.

RUSSIAN
We want ze pyramid.

DOMINO
I told you we don’t have it.

SWITTERS
UNHAND THOSE NUNS!

Suddenly, around the corner comes Switters, WALKING ON THE LONG STILTS 10 FEET OFF THE GROUND.

They all stare in shock.

He takes long, tenuous steps and brushes his head against the tree branches which almost knock him over. Teetering and staggering towards them he gains too much momentum, goes past them and has to circle back.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
You are trespassing on Vatican property. I’ll have you know this compound is under the personal protection of Bashar al-Assad, Doris Day and Audubon Poe!

One of the Russians grabs Masked Beauty and pulls off her veil, revealing her huge nasal mole.

He gasps.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
That’s no way to treat a lady. Are you aware of the Geneva Convention?

DOMINO
Yes, if you do not leave matters will be turned over to our Chief of Security.

She nods towards Switters. One of the Russians pulls out a gun and the nuns step back in fear.

SWITTERS
(pulling out his gun)
I have one of those, too. Care to see which one’s louder?
HE REARS BACK AND KICKS ONE OF THE RUSSIANS IN THE SHINS WITH HIS STILTS, KNOWING HIM BACKWARDS HOWLING IN PAIN.

Switters also staggers back, flailing his gun and trying to keep his balance. A group of goats come into the yard and run between Switters’ stilts causing to wobble backwards, losing more balance until he falls ass-backwards into a bush.

BLAM!

His gun fires, ricocheting off the ground and HITTING MASKED BEAUTY IN THE FACE. She goes down. Domino rushes to her side, looking back at the Russians with fire in her eyes.

DOMINO
Get out of here right now!

The Russians back up, run out of the compound, jump into their car and drive away. Switters sits up in the bush.

DOMINO (CONT.)
(to Switters)
You reckless maniac. Your irresponsible macho gunplay has disfigured my aunt.

Sitting up, Masked Beauty reveals that her mole has been shot clear off leaving a smooth, perfect nose.

INT. MASKED BEAUTY’S BEDROOM – DAY

Domino attends to Masked Beauty who rests peacefully in bed. She caps a bottle of iodine and leaves, closing the door quietly behind her. Outside, Switters sits in his wheelchair.

DOMINO
So you are back in this thing?

SWITTERS
My other ride is in the shop. How is she?

DOMINO
Shocked, but she’ll recover.

Domino crosses her arms. She holds out her hand. Sheepishly, he hands over the pyramid.

DOMINO (CONT.)
Stealing from nuns? Really?
SWITTERS
I think you underestimate the power of this curse.

DOMINO
Your only curse is your selfishness.

SWITTERS
You have to believe me, I never intended any harm to come to you or your Sisters.

DOMINO
And neither do I. Which is why we’re going to return the relic to its rightful owners. Since there is some dispute we must let the Vatican decide.

SWITTERS
You’re going to give it to Rome?

DOMINO
Yes. We voted and we’re going to present it ourselves to the Holy See.

SWITTERS
Then I insist you let me come with you. The journey will be perilous and there are those who will stop at nothing to get it from you.

DOMINO
I think you’ve done quite enough already. And there is no reason for anyone to hurt us. We’re flies.

SWITTERS
People swat flies. And you must insist on handing it to the Pope directly. Don’t trust anyone.

DOMINO
You don’t trust the Vatican?

SWITTERS
The Swiss Guard haven’t fired a shot in five hundred years. Think they’re a bit trigger happy? I’ve gotten you into this (MORE)
SWITERS (cont’d)
mess, I’m not going to abandon you now. So what do you say?

DOMINO
I say you’re out of your cotton-pickin’ mind.

INT. DAMASCUS AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

The nuns board an Alitalia plane. Domino looks back at Switters who sits in his wheelchair, dressed in a nun’s habit with Masked Beauty’s veil. He makes a call on his cellphone.

INT. MAESTRA’S HOME - DAY

Bobby Case’s cellphone vibrates on the table. We see two pairs of intertwined feet and hear love-making noises.

His cellphone goes to voicemail.

SWITERS (V.O.)
Bobby, this is your old pal Switters. Although you wouldn’t think it to look at me. You could say my looks are becoming a distraction. Anyway, I’m going to need your help. ..

INT. ALITALIA FLIGHT - DAY

THE STEWARDESS walks down the aisle. Towards the back of the plane sit our five nuns, Switters included. She stares at him with her mouth open. That’s one ugly nun.

SWITERS
Thank God, signorina. Do you have anything without chickpeas? It’s all I’ve had for three weeks. And bring me some alcohol, too. Let’s blow this falafel stand.
(looking at Domino)
This is gonna get ugly, isn’t it?

EXT. DAMASCUS AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

The Alitalia plane turns down the runway, picking up speed and takes off over the ancient Syrian capitol.
EXT. SIDE ENTRANCE TO VATICAN CITY - DAY

The nuns pile out of a Vatican minivan. Switters is lowered by a handicapped lift. A CARDINAL with black, greased-back hair comes out to greet them, his hands folded in front of him.

CARDINAL
Hello, Sisters. Welcome to Vatican City. His Holiness eagerly awaits your visit.
(to Switters)
And if you, sir, could please leave your firearm concealed in that briefcase. We will lock it in our vault and I assure you it will be returned after your visit.

SWITTERS
Told you these guys were good.

CARDINAL
Right this way, please.

TWO SWISS GUARDS take the valise and escort the group through a wood-paneled lobby and out a door into a grand garden.

EXT. VATICAN GARDENS - DAY

The nuns are led through a manicured garden and join a long line of people waiting for an audience with THE POPE, who stands under an ivy-covered pavillion.

CARDINAL
Do you have the relic?

DOMINO
Yes, we do.

She pulls out the newspaper-wrapped package.

CARDINAL
Wonderful. Please present it to the Cardinal standing next to His Holiness and then you may receive blessings.

SWITTERS
Oh no we don’t. The deal was we give it to the Holy Kielbasa himself.

Domino KICKS him.
SWITERS (CONT.)
Ow! That hurt.

DOMINO
(to the Cardinal)
That will be fine. We are sure that in his wisdom The Holy Father will know what to do.

CARDINAL
That is very sensible, Sister. And in light of the diplomatic sensitivity of the situation, we appreciate you bringing the item directly to us. You are a beacon of the Lord’s light.

SWITERS
Puh-lease.

DOMINO
(ignoring him)
You’re welcome.

CARDINAL
Although it may have been better if you left him behind.

DOMINO
Your Eminence, I’m beginning to think the same thing. But it is our preference.

CARDINAL
And so it shall be.

He nods and backs away.

SWITERS
Think anyone ever told him that it looks like the Exxon Valdez has run aground in his hair?

The line moves closer towards the Pope. ANOTHER CARDINAL approaches Domino. He looks familiar to Switters... that’s no Cardinal but AUDUBON POE. He leads her up the steps.

POE
Right this way please.

SWITERS
Wait! That’s no Missionary!
It’s a Mercenary!
Everyone turns to look at him. One of the Swiss Guards puts his hand on Switters’ wheelchair, holding him back.

Domino is led off into a side garden away where she is surrounded by Poe and other men. Switters can see her clutching the pyramid to her chest and shaking her head. Poe pulls the package out of her hands.

DOMINO
No, no. This isn’t right. You can’t do this!

SWITTERS
STOP! YOU MOTHER-FUCKER! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF OF HER!

Everyone is shocked and moves away from him. The Pope is whisked away.

Poe unravels the package layer by layer -- BUT INSTEAD OF THE PYRAMID, IT IS THE CD OF BROADWAY SHOWTUNES AND A SMALL ROCK.

Poe grabs Domino by the shoulders.

The Swiss Guard grabs Switters BUT HE FLIPS THE GUARD’S ARM BACKWARDS, BREAKING IT INSTANTLY.

The Swiss Guard falls back in pain.

Switters holds out his foot and looks at the ground. . .in order to save her he must walk up the steps.

He can’t do it.

He sees Domino pulled away, looking back at him for help.

Switters holds his foot in the air as if an invisible force is preventing him from going any further. He is either going to have to step on the ground or watch Domino get dragged away.

SWITTERS STEPS OUT OF THE WHEELCHAIR.

THE MOMENT HIS FOOT TOUCHES THE GROUND THERE IS A FLASH OF WHITE, HE HEARS A “POP!” AND COLLAPSES ON THE GROUND.

EVERYTHING TURNS TO BLACK

COMPLETE DARKNESS

In the darkness we hear a few whirls of wind or maybe a distance ocean.

Then a coughing.
More of a clearing of the throat.

The blackness lightens a bit and we begin to pick out hazy objects in a room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM – DAY

Switters wakes up. As his eyes adjust to the light of room he can make out a man sitting in a chair across from him, legs crossed and looking at his fingernails as if he’s just had a manicure. It’s Poe.

SWITTERS
What happened? Where am I?

POE
Probably think you’re having some trendy near-death experience, I expect.

SWITTERS
Poe? You’re here?

POE
Why, who did you expect? The man in a white-beard?

SWITTERS
The taboo. It’s taken me.

POE
No, you fool. You fainted.

SWITTERS
No, it was End-of-Time’s curse. It hit me like a poisoned hammer all the way from the Amazon.

POE
You slipped, fell and hit your head on the concrete steps. It sounded like a coconut cracking. You’ve been out for five days.

SWITTERS
Five days? And what about the curse?

POE
I don’t know anything about a curse. My job is to get the pyramid. The rest is your affair.
SWITERS
If there is no curse then Potney’s
still alive. Son of a bitch.

Poe scoots up to the bed.

POE
I don’t know what you’re
blathering about. All I know is
that you have what I want. My
business is with you.

SWITERS
Whom are you working for?

POE
If I were an ethical man I’d cut
you in on the deal. But I’m not.
I’m greedy and vengeful. Now
where’s the pyramid?

SWITERS
Not so fast, hot stuff. It appears
that my general sense of misgiving
has paid off. You want the pyramid,
you’re going to have to cut me in
after all.

POE
Not really. We have the nuns.
Including the one you seem so
protective of. Domino, I believe
her name is? Ludicrous what
people name their kids today.

Switters looks at him. He has no play.

SWITERS
The coat check at the Vatican.
It’s in my valise.

Poe brushes off his trousers, gets up and looks back.

POE
Oh, and if it’s not there I’ll
come back and we won’t talk.

He leaves the room.

Switters waits a moment and jumps out of bed -- he collapses
on the ground, pulling down the sheets with him.
SWITTERS

Atrophy.

Wrapped in the bed sheets, he gingerly gets up and walks over to the window with chicken-legs. He rubs them for circulation and looks at the street below -- several stories down he sees Poe walk out of the main entrance to the hospital.

Switters looks back at the door -- doctors and nurses linger in the hallway. No exit there.

He pushes open the window and steps out onto a rickety scaffolding which covers the outside of the building.

EXT. SCAFFOLDING - CONTINUOUS

He swings his leg over, surprising an ITALIAN CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

SWITTERS

Excuse me.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

Chi il fotte la sono? Andara
via da qui! Andara via da qui!

The construction worker continues to yell at him but Switters walks carefully past.

Switters reaches the end of the scaffolding and sees that there is a ladder down to a lower one. He climbs down that ladder and across the lower scaffolding, encountering ANOTHER ITALIAN who also screams at him.

SWITTERS

Who are you, the Mario Brothers?

He continues to the end and turns to see the worker ACTUALLY ROLL A SMALL BARREL TOWARDS HIM.

Quickly, Switters lowers himself down the ladder to another scaffolding and from afar, the whole scene looks like a screen from DONKEY KONG. . .

. . . Switters goes down one level, the barrel bouncing over his head and leaping over another one.

He continues to the end of the scaffolding but this time there is no ladder at the end. The street is three stories below.

He wraps the sheets around both his ankles and holds the other corners in his hands.
He JUMPS.

And like a flying squirrel, the sheet catches the wind, slowing him down.

He hits the sidewalk with a THUD.

SWITTERS
Ow, my fucking legs.

He looks up and sees Poe get into a taxi and disappear into the busy Roman traffic.

A CAR SCREECHES TO A HALT RIGHT BEHIND HIM.

Switters looks back and sees the passenger door open and ONE OF THE RUSSIANS step out of the car (an Opel) and walk over to Switters with his arm cocked, ready to punch him.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Opel.
BLAM! THE RUSSIAN PUNCHES HIM IN THE FACE, KNOCKING HIM OUT.

Black. Again.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

This time Switters comes to sitting upright in a chair. Across from him are the Russians, one of them eating spaghetti.

SWITTERS
Carbo-loading?

RUSSIAN
We want ze pyramid.

SWITTERS
I don’t have it.

RUSSIAN
We know. Your friend Poe has it. He wants five million dollars.

SWITTERS
Oh, good.

RUSSIAN
Yes, it saves us from having to torturing you. Now we only must dispose you.
SWITTERS
It has occurred to me that we
can be of great use to each other.

RUSSIAN
Explain.

SWITTERS
Well, first of all Poe will try
to screw you. Take your money,
give you some cheap knockoff and
disappear. I happen to be in the
unique position to be able to
verify the object’s authenticity.
I need Poe’s contact, you need
the pyramid. Let’s work together.
They’ve got my nuns, I’m not
going to do anything rash. Plus
you’ll be there. Shoot me if
anything goes wrong.

RUSSIAN
And why should I trust you?

SWITTERS
Because I have a plan.

He sees two round scars on the Russian’s wrist.

SWITTERS
Excuse me, but is that a snake
bite?

RUSSIAN
A boa in the Cambodian jungle.

SWITTERS
(motioning to scars on his face)
Venom?

RUSSIAN
Yes. It happened back when we were
called KGB.

SWITTERS
Look, Poe’s got what you want and
he’s got what I want and I know
how we can get them both. After
all, “neither man nor nation can
exist without a sublime idea.”
That’s-
RUSSIAN
Dostoyevsky, yes. You quote Russian author to butter me off.

SWITTERS
It’s “up”, everyone’s making that mistake. And not an author, the Grand Master of Russian letters. (pouring the Russian more wine) So where’s the handoff?

EXT. MILVAN BRIDGE, ROME - DAY

Switters, holding a briefcase, walks across the ancient bridge crowded with tourists.

From high above -- we see Switters through a sniper rifle’s scope. One of the Russians is watching from the roof of a building. . .Behind the Russian someone else is looking through binoculars at the Russian and Switters.

Switters walks across the bridge. Poe walks towards him from the other direction, holding a plastic bag. Switters passes the other Russian disguised as a sketch artist. They nod.

Poe and Switters meet in the center of the bridge.

POE
I have to hand it to you. I like your style. Working with the Russians all along.

SWITTERS
You are a villainous snake, Poe but thanks. Professionally, coming from you that means a lot. You’re certainly as good as they come.

POE
We’re pawns in a larger game.

SWITTERS
Tell me about it. So where are the nuns?

POE
They’re safe.

SWITTERS
If anything happens to them I’m going to kill you or get somebody really good to kill you.
POE
The nuns will be released just as soon as I get back with that briefcase. Let me see the money.

Switters cracks open the briefcase and flips through some bills, snapping it shut. Poe shows him the pyramid in the bag.

They stare at each other.

SWITTERS
And I want my valise back. With the Showtunes CD.

Poe nods.

Slowly, simultaneously, they hand their packages to each other. With his left hand Switters takes the pyramid and with his right he hands over the briefcase.

They’re still for a moment, holding both items with each hand.

THEN POE WRENCHES THE BRIEFCASE AWAY AND TOSSES THE PYRAMID OVER THE SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.

A sniper shot fires, hitting the ledge of the bridge, just missing Switters.

Poe takes off with the briefcase in the other direction. Switters ducks down and crawls over to the side of the bridge. He looks down -- the pyramid has landed on a little island in the river around one of the bridge supports.

The “sketch-artist” Russian jumps off the bridge and dives into the water, swimming towards the island.

Switters looks up and sees Poe blend into the crowd of people. He gets up and chases him, ducking sniper fire.

Switters runs off the bridge and turns a corner. The streets are covered with people. Switters jumps up on the roof of a car and searches the crowd -- no sign of Poe.

He grabs a flagpole and pulls himself higher over the crowd -- seeing Poe duck down an alleyway. Switters jumps back down on the car and an AMERICAN TOURIST waves money at him.

AMERICAN TOURIST
Sing for us!

SWITTERS
The CIA really did kill JFK.
He jumps down, grabs the money and runs down a side street. He sees Poe up ahead, looking back over his shoulder. Switters ducks into a store. It’s a cheap clothing store and amongst the touristy t-shirts he sees a straw hat. Switters shoves his money on the counter.

EXT. ROME STREET - DAY

Poe walks quickly up the quiet street, looking at reflections in store windows for tails. He spots the straw hat.

Poe spins around to see an OLD ITALIAN MAN WEARING THE STRAW HAT leaning against a car across the street. Switters is actually ducked down behind the old man holding his fingers to his lips, begging him to be quiet.

Poe continues down the street and Switters jumps up, kisses the man on the cheek and follows.

Poe turns into a small hotel: Pensione Paradise. Switters looks up at the windows -- only one of them has its curtains fully drawn. He crosses the street, entering the pensione.

INT. PENSIONE PARADISE HALLWAY - DAY

It’s a dark, rather shabby place. Switters walks down a hallway of doors. He stops at one and takes a deep breath.

He reaches out for the handle.

Just as he’s about to touch it, the door bursts open and Poe stands there, pointing a gun at him.

POE

Come on in.

He turns and Switters follows him into the room.

INT. PENSIONE PARADISE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The frightened nuns sit on a bed, shocked to see Switters.

DOMINO

Switters!

PIPPI

You can walk?

SWITTERS

Praise Jesus?
He continues into the room and sees POTNEY SMITHE sitting in the corner, taking money out of the briefcase and into a bag.

SWITTERS
Potney, you son of a bitch.

POTNEY
Oh, hullo old chap. Surprised to see me?

SWITTERS
Not exactly. I knew there would be some evil bastard at the bottom of this. So there never was a curse. You stole the pyramid, knew the Russians would kill you if you tried to sell it, so you faked your death and used Poe as a middleman to sell it back to them. But why me? Why did you have to drag me into your fiendish plot?

POTNEY
Luck. Happened to run into you in Peru and figured you’d be as good as anyone to verify my death.

SWITTERS
What about the tribe? End-of-Time?

POE
A Peruvian wedding band I hired out of Lima.

FLASHBACK --

EXT. LIMA HILTON - EVENING

Members of the Kandakanero tribe unload music equipment from a van, dressed now in matching ruffled shirts and blue tuxedos. The band leader, End-of-Time, steps out of the van and looks around, drinking from a bottle of spring water.

INT. PENSIONE PARADISE ROOM - PRESENT

Poe motions for Switters to sit next to the nuns.

POTNEY
It was Poe’s idea to get you to retrieve the pyramid.
SWITTERS
Why not, I was already knee-deep.
You had it all worked out.

POTNEY
Indeed. And I can’t help but say
that it’s all been rather fun.
Now you must excuse me.
(to Poe)
Well it’s all there. Every last
ruble. Your share is in the bag.

POE
Bring it over.

Potney kicks over the bag and Poe glances down at it, keeping
his gun trained on Switters.

POE (CONT.)
We’re good.

POTNEY
Right. Now I’m going to slowly back
up towards the door and I want you
to wait ten minutes before leaving.
Mister Poe, it has been a pleasure
doing business with you. I hope to
never see any of you again!

POE
What do we do about him?

POTNEY
Oh it doesn’t matter. You led him
back here, he’s your problem. Shoot
him if you want. Shoot them all.

The nuns gasp.

Potney slowly backs up towards the door, holding the briefcase
in front of him. He reaches back for the handle, holding it
for a moment. He’s searching for a good last line.

POTNEY (CONT.)
Get stuffed!

He turns and runs out, the door slamming behind him.

Beat.

Everyone sits still.
SWITTERS
Well this is awkward.

DOMINO
You mean you don’t have any ideas?

SWITTERS
No.

DOMINO
What kind of CIA man are you? What were you planning to do once you got here?

SWITTERS
Hadn’t really thought it through that far.

DOMINO
Not much of a rescue then, is it?

SWITTERS
Sorry.
(checking his watch)
I did make a phone call

Poe picks up the bag with one hand, keeping his gun leveled at Switters and the nuns. He opens the dresser drawer and pulls out a silencer which he puts in his mouth. With his teeth he slowly turns the silencer onto the gun, his eyes on Switters.

The nuns are crying and holding each other.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
Not the nuns, okay?

POE
Don’t worry. I’m just going to slow you down a bit.

SWITTERS
I can’t believe I’m saying this but could you shoot me in the legs? Below the kneecap.

POE
Of course.

Just as Poe sets his sights on Switters A WHIRLING AND HUMMING NOISE COMES FROM OUTSIDE THE WINDOW. Poe draws the curtains — hovering right outside is Bobby Case flying a helicopter. Maestra is in the passenger seat, who gives Poe the finger.
SWITTERS
The fucking cavalry. About time.

INT. PENSIONE PARADISE ROOM - DAY

Poe is handcuffed and carted off by CIA OFFICERS. Switters, Bobby Case, Maestra and the nuns sit around the room.

SWITTERS
Maestra? How did you get dragged into all of this?

MAESTRA
I'll be asking the questions around here, mister. What have you done with my parrot, you ingrate?

BOBBY CASE
Easy, darling. All in good time.

SWITTERS
Darling?

DOMINO
I demand to know what's going on.

BOBBY CASE
Yes, this I'd like to hear.

SWITTERS
The CIA's known about Potney's pyramid scheme all along. Since I was already injected in the arena they decided to let me cook, hoping I'd retrieve the item without the Russians suspecting their involvement. Pretty standard stuff. But I expected better out of you, Bobby. You could have shared some Intel with me.

BOBBY CASE
Hold yer horses, partner. You were not on a need to know and we weren't sure what was getting leaked. When did you figure it all out, incidentally?

SWITTERS
When I looked inside the pyramid and saw it was full of electrical (MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d)
wiring unavailable to ancient
Peruvians three thousand years ago.

DOMINO
Electrical wiring? What is it?

SWITTERS/BOBBY CASE
A listening device.

BOBBY CASE
Specifically, America’s most
valuably placed listening device.
We’ve been listening to Russian
pillow talk for twenty-five years.
Some in the Intel Community believe
it’s one of the main reasons why
the Berlin Wall fell.

FLASHBACK --

INT. VATICAN COAT CHECK – DAY

The Bishop who took Switters’ valise (“Exxon Valdez”) hands it
to the coat checker -- Bobby Case in disguise.

BOBBY CASE (V.O.)
The batteries were running low.
Once we learned Potney had
kleptoed it we figured we’d take
the opportunity to replace ‘em.

INT. PENSIONE PARADISE – PRESENT

DOMINO
So this whole escapade was just
to replace some batteries?

BOBBY CASE
They’ll be newer, longer lasting.
Congratulations Switters, you’ve
done your country a great service.
You all have. You’ve been part of
one of the most important Intel
gathering operations in the books.
Off the record, of course.

SWITTERS
But did you have to involve my
grandmother?
That’s it, Bobby. I haven’t spanked him for thirty-five years but that’s the final straw.

Bobby Case holds her back.

Listen, I was investigating that mole and after Hector Sumac’s disappearance, well I thought it might have been you. Sorry. So while you were gone instead of going to Peru I went to look through your house. But not to worry, your name is clear.

You found the mole?

No, you were right. There never was a mole. It was a wild goose chase all along.

What about Hector Sumac?

Found him in St. Petersburg.

Russia?

No, Florida. The one with the Hooters. He was on vacation. We think he’s going to be one of our most productive agents.

You lied to me from day one.

Don’t take it personally, kid. You know how it goes.

You put all these nuns lives in jeopardy for some esoteric political gains.
BOBBY CASE
All in a days work. Hey c’mon, everything worked out. The Russians got their pyramid back, your curse is lifted and we’ve got a top secret listening device back in play.

SWITTERS
But you misplayed one card, Bobby.

BOBBY CASE
And what’s that?

SWITTERS
You were banking on the fact that when the dust settled I’d walk away a bit sore but ultimately not care. Well I’m going to shock you. I do care. You abused our friendship and took me for granted as an amoral self-serving survivalist.

BOBBY CASE
Aren’t you?

SWITTERS
At times. Less now. And I’m not going to let you flag-waving, Bible-thumping Cowboys ruin my CIA. And I’m not going to quit, either. I’m going to stick around and undermine all the evil lies we perpetrate every day. Switters is back with a full tank of wahoo. And he’s going to start shaking things up.

BOBBY CASE
Be my guest. In fact, why not start right here and for instance tell this wonderful, remarkable loving woman who practically raised you, what really happened to her parrot.

Beat.

All eyes are on him.

MAESTRA
This had better be good.
SWITTERS

Ahhh. . .

Switters looks at Domino who encourages him.

SWITTERS (CONT.)

Sailor Boy is dead.

He takes a deep breath.

SWITTERS (CONT.)

And I may have eaten him.
(Domino nudges him on)
Actually, I did eat him. Tasted like chicken. I’m sorry.

MAESTRA ATTACKS -- throwing herself at him in a violent rage, arm bracelets clanging at her sides. She has to be restrained by two CIA men. She reaches for one of their guns but the Operative wrests it out of her hands.

MAESTRA

No, wait. Wait a minute! I would just like to say something to him.

They let up AND SHE ATTACKS AGAIN -- more energy than you’d expect from a septuagenarian. She lets up and they stop but stay close enough to restrain her in case of another attack.

MAESTRA (CONT.)

Alright, Alright. Switters, I always thought that you were a cut above the prideful narcissists of your generation. My wish when I charged you with Sailor Boy was that in caring for another creature of this earth you would awaken something inside of you. As irate as I am I cannot help but be proud. It’s clear to me now that the long dormant romantic spirit is alive within you. Go. Be free to be yourself.

Switters smiles. Bobby Case kisses her hand.

SWITTERS

Love is in the air. The room is filling with forgiveness. I too have found a pickled jar of the good stuff we call love. Maestra, meet Domino.
The women look at each other. Maestra walks over and they circle each other.

MAESTRA/DOMINO

I approve.

INT. ROME TAXI - DAY

Potney sits in the back seat with the briefcase on his lap, singing to himself and jumping up and down on the seat.

POTNEY

I did it! I did it! Wait, this isn’t the airport? This is where you picked me up!

The back door opens and Bobby Case leans against the window.

POTNEY (CONT.)

Bollocks.

BOBBY CASE

Ever heard of the witness protection program?

POTNEY

Yes.

BOBBY CASE

Well you’re not going on it.

Bobby Case takes the briefcase as Switters and Domino walk out of the Pensione Paradise together. They approach the cab.

BOBBY CASE

(to Potney)

Disappear. And if you ever say anything about any of this to anyone, I’ll let the Russians know you’re still alive and I won’t have to come after you. They’ll jab you with a poison umbrella in your sleep.

POTNEY

What am I supposed to do for a living?

SWITTERS

Potney, you are wholly unethical and a complete egotist. You’ve

(MORE)
SWITTERS (cont’d)
already tried Academia. I suggest you stand for Parliament.

He puts his arm around Domino and they walk away and they continue down the street arm-in-arm, nun and CIA man.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
I really meant it when I said I was tired of the Cowboys at the Company creating international incidents, embarrassing the United States and getting innocent people killed. I had a plan. And it involved Domino.

SWITTERS
Sorry to have dragged you into all of this.

DOMINO
That’s alright. Italian night was getting kind of stale anyway.

SWITTERS
What if I told you I had a plan?

DOMINO
I’d run the other way.

SWITTERS
I know it sounds crazy but what if we went around the world working behind the scenes to distract the powerful and covertly thwart their ambitions.

DOMINO
Is that some kind of proposal?

SWITTERS
I’m not asking you to leave the Church or anything. I’m saying take it with you. In fact, I’ll join your Church. The only Church that ever was. The human heart.

They stop in the middle of the street and kiss. People stop and stare. Parents bring their children indoors.

SWITTERS (CONT.)
So what do you think?
DOMINO
I think, Switters, that despite your habitual lying and reckless behavior you can make anything in life seem funny and grand. What do I think? I think you’re crazy. . . . But I’ll go anyway.

SWITTERS
That’s great.

They kiss again.

EXT. SEATTLE SKYLINE – DAY

PAN ACROSS the familiar, gray cityscape from Pike Place Market through the parks and into the hills of the Magnolia District.

SWITTERS (V.O.)
I got a call from Suzy who told me she was enjoying her first semester at college where she had sex for the first time. Since then she said she had been praying for something ridiculous. Something impossible. That Mother Mary would restore her virginity. When she asked if I believed in miracles I took a deep breath and said, “they happen all the time”

EXT. BANGKOK STREET – EVENING

WE PUSH IN ON a small, corner bar on a rainy Bangkok street over the opening strains of Tony Bennett singing “Just in Time” CONTINUING THROUGH THE NEXT FEW SCENES --

SWITTERS (V.O.) (CONT.)
The Baht was weak against the dollar. I flew to Bangkok to clear the coconut. A back-alley tailor made me a new linen suit. And I danced.

Switters is framed in the open door of the empty bar, dancing to the music in his new suit.

MUSIC
Just in time I found you
(MORE)
MUSIC (cont’d)

just in time, before you came
my time was running low
I was lost, the losing dice
were tossed, my bridges all
were crossed nowhere to go. . .

INT. RUSSIAN PRESIDENT’S BEDROOM – EVENING

The lights are dim. The Russian President is getting hot and heavy under the sheets with some spicy Slavic lass. PAN OVER TO THE MANTEL WHERE the pyramid (cum-CIA-listening-device) rests on the shelf, restored to its former place of potency.

WE ZOOM IN CLOSER -- SUDDENLY WE HEAR A NOISE COME FROM INSIDE. Some kind of recording.

PYRAMID
(in Sailor Boy’s voice)
PEOPLE OF ZEE WORLD, RELAX!

INT. LIMA HILTON BALLROOM – EVENING

A BRIDE AND GROOM spin around the dance floor in a circle of family and friends. Their first dance.

On stage, the band is the Kandakanero Tribe (stenciled on the drum), dressed in their ruffled shirts and bad tuxedos. End-of-Time, spins around and sings into the microphone. He sounds a lot like Tony Bennett.

END OF TIME
(singing)
Now you’re here and I know
Just where I’m goin’
No more doubt or fear
I’ve found my way
For love came just in time
You found me just in time
And changed my life
That lucky daaay. . .

INT. LANGLEY CAFETERIA – DAY

THE MUSIC FADES AS Christopher Walken, our trusted polygrapher, stands in line at the Dunkin’ Donuts counter within the CIA.
SWITTERS (V.O.)
Oh, and I stopped by Langley on
the way. To drop in on a friend.

Walken takes a cup of coffee. The lid hasn’t been secured
properly and it spills on the floor in front of him. He has to
jump back out of the way of the steaming hot liquid.

WALKEN
(in a thick, Russian accent)
_TIDONOKA!_ TI _RAZLEL CAFÉ’NA MENYA!

He stops himself, looks up and smiles to the stunned barista.

WALKEN (CONT.)
I’m sorry. My temper. _Spaciba._
_(he winks)_
I mean, thank you.

A hand comes down on his shoulder. Switters, Bobby Case and a
dozen CIA Security Officers stand behind Walken.

SWITTERS
You slipped up during my polygraph
when you told me you had a friend
who was bitten by a snake in the
Cambodian jungle. Well I met that
friend. He’s a Russian Agent. And
there’s no record in your file of
going to Cambodia.

Walken smiles, shrugs his shoulders and takes off down the
long marble corridor, dropping the coffee. They do not pursue.
He turns a corner and is the CIA’s main cafeteria. Hundreds of
operatives look up from their lunches. Walken stops. He’s
trapped. He begins...to tap-dance.

EXT. BANGKOK BAR - EVENING

THE MUSIC PICKS UP AGAIN AS WE PAN DOWN INTO THE BAR where
Switters dances, enjoying the freedom of movement.

MUSIC
_For love came just in time_
_You found me just in time and_
_Changed my life that LUCKY DAY!_

He reaches out his hand to Domino, who has been sitting in the
corner out of sight, watching him dance. She takes his hand
and joins them. They are the only ones dancing in the bar.
SWITTERS (V.O.)
We’re starting a new club, Domino and I. A new organization in which we’ll roam the world following my missions and her good Christian charity subverting the subversion, as it were, and then just wing it from there. A couple of monkey wrenches in the machine. Maybe we’ll deface a few advertisements. Vandalize some golf courses.

MUSIC
For love came just in time
You found me just in time and
Changed my life that LUCKY DAY!

PULL BACK to see a familiar parrot fly across the sky, stop to look at us and continue on into the twinkling Thai night.

FADE OUT

THE END